

# WORKPLACE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Revised February 2021



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

At GAIN we aim to have a diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace: where all staff, whatever their gender, race, ethnicity/national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education, disability or religious belief feel valued and respected.

We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and are committed to promoting and providing equal opportunity in employment and avoiding discrimination at recruitment and during employment.

GAIN recognises that a diverse workforce makes an essential contribution to the success of its programmes and to its ability to reduce malnutrition through sustainable strategies aimed at improving the health and nutrition of populations at risk. Drawing on the different perspectives and experiences of many individuals will add value to GAIN's core business.

Issues of diversity (where everyone is invited), inclusion (where everyone contributes) and equity (where results and benefits are distributed fairly) are intrinsically and instrumentally important for preventing and addressing malnutrition. We are fully aware of this and seek to live this knowledge through our shared values.

The aim of the policy is to communicate the commitment of the organisation to the promotion of equality of opportunity in GAIN amongst its employees, and its relationships with other stakeholders.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

- Promote a working environment where all employees are treated fairly, with respect and dignity. This includes Board Members, Consultants, Volunteers and Interns;
- Prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All employees are entitled to a workplace free from harassment and discrimination;
- Challenge discriminatory behaviours or attitudes wherever they occur and respond swiftly and sensitively to any incidences of discrimination;
- Promote and foster good relations across the workforce. This means being aware of the

- impact of our behaviour;
- Ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance;
- Celebrate a diverse workforce to ensure fair treatment. Respect and value the differences of everyone;
- Promote an inclusive culture.

### **3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

GAIN's Equality and Diversity (ED) policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) GAIN across its locations globally, whether full time or part time, temporary or permanent. This includes:

- job applicants
- employees
- contract workers
- agency workers
- volunteers/interns
- consultants

GAIN will also apply the principles of its ED policy in its interactions with other stakeholders such as suppliers, donors, partners and beneficiaries.

It covers the following:

- recruitment, selection and promotion
- terms and conditions of employment
- professional development
- flexible working options
- safe working environment
- leadership, management and accountability
- grievances, disciplinary action and termination of employment

In cases where the application of the policy conflicts with national legislation, the legislation takes precedence.<sup>1</sup>

### **4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY**

GAIN's Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, and for

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the process GAIN will follow if the policy is breached. It does not refer to the intention, the principles or the scope of the policy. Thus, the policy applies even in countries where some forms of discrimination are legal.

ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination in each of its areas of operation. The Board has delegated to the Executive Director the day-to-day responsibility for implementing the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review.

The Director of Strategic Operations and Head of Human Resources have particular responsibility for ensuring that all HR policies and procedures support the objectives of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for setting appropriate standards of behaviour, eliminating discrimination, providing equality of opportunity within their teams and for promoting a culture of tolerance and respect.

All GAIN's employees are responsible for treating others with dignity and respect.

## 5. MAKING THE POLICY EFFECTIVE

GAIN believes that commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion at work creates a positive environment that makes full use of the wide range of talents and resources of its staff. By providing the right environment it will also encourage effective employee relations within the organisation.

GAIN's aim is to make equal opportunities a natural and integral part of management. This means improving the quality of judgements made and actions taken by removing bias, prejudice and stereotyping. GAIN seeks the support and co-operation of all staff in making the policy work.

All managers should be aware of their role in setting standards, creating the right environment for equality of opportunity and ensuring commitment to the policy.

**Managers** will ensure that:

- standards referred to in this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility
- bring the details of the policy to the attention of their team's members
- ensure that information on equity, diversity and inclusion is included in all induction processes
- ensure that their team members are available to attend relevant equality training programmes.

**The Human Resources Department** is responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively communicated to all employees and all those involved with the organisation at whatever level or position, and for providing advice and guidance where appropriate. It will in particular provide training and induction on equal opportunities to all new employees. In addition, upon any significant update, the policy will be presented to all staff or via department/office meetings.

**Each member of staff** has a responsibility to:

- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying
- report any discriminatory acts
- treat others fairly, without prejudice
- promote a work environment where an individual can feel valued and realise his/her potential and encourage others to do so.

The following sections describe how the policy is applied throughout GAIN. Failure to comply with the policy, procedures and practices outlined below will be considered within the framework of GAIN's disciplinary procedure.

## **6. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND PROMOTION**

The recruitment process must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the post in respect of experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications. It is against GAIN's policy (and in certain circumstances the law) to discriminate either directly or indirectly on any of the grounds contained within the policy statement at any stage of the recruitment process. Definitions of direct and indirect discrimination can be found below.

GAIN advertises all open positions on its website and states clearly that it welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

The job advertisement and job specification will specify clearly the knowledge, experience and skills required by the applicant. Selection for employment will be on the basis of relevant criteria, experience, aptitude and ability.

Candidate selection will always be carried out by more than one person and never by a single-sex panel. For monitoring purposes, applicants are required to complete a monitoring form; these details remain confidential and are not given to the short-listing manager.

Accessibility for applicants with special needs will be considered in organising the recruitment process. We will provide any reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities to ensure they have access to our services and employment.

## **7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

GAIN is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and believes that as part of that principle all staff should be equally graded for the same work, or for work of broadly similar weight.

GAIN applies a job classification scheme which uses specific criteria to identify jobs of similar

complexity and responsibility, and to place them within classification bands in order to identify work of equivalent or the same value. Pay is then determined by the location of the position within the classification scheme. GAIN believes that its pay system should be transparent, based on objective criteria and free from bias. To achieve this GAIN will, on a regular basis, review its existing and future pay practices for staff, including those who are absent on pregnancy and maternity leave. All individuals will be informed how his/her pay is arrived at. GAIN believes that it should fairly reward the skills, experience and contribution of staff.

## **8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

GAIN's performance management process supports the identification of professional development needs and opportunities and the identification of career development goals.

GAIN recognises that training is a key way in which staff may develop the knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience necessary for the effective performance of their job. Where training needs are identified through the performance management process, training opportunities will be made available, subject to financial and operational constraints, to all staff. It is against GAIN's policy and against the law to discriminate directly or indirectly, either in the selection of candidates for training courses or in the arrangements made for selection.

Equal opportunities issues begin to be addressed at the Induction stage and are reinforced in other ways, including management development programmes and skills training (eg performance management; recruitment and selection). Training materials must be free from bias and not discriminatory.

Longer term development opportunities are available to all staff subject only to financial and operational constraints.

GAIN will review its learning and development strategy regularly in order to identify and meet training needs which relate to the achievement of equality of opportunity.

## **9. FLEXIBLE WORKING OPTIONS**

GAIN provides access to a range of flexible work opportunities to support employees with family responsibilities, or other employees whose work can be carried out effectively from home.

## **10. SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

GAIN prohibits all forms of physical or verbal harassment and discrimination. Please see the Respect and Dignity at Work policy.

## 11. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

GAIN aims for diversity in its senior management and governance structures.

A statement of management support for the Equality and Diversity Policy is published on GAIN's website and is available to all staff along with the policy.

The Head of HR and HR Representatives are responsible for monitoring the policy and any complaints received.

## 12. GRIEVANCES, DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

GAIN will ensure that, where applicable, grievance and disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all employees, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

GAIN will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees.

## 13. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Staff should use the grievance procedure to make a formal complaint regarding any instance of harassment or discrimination. More information regarding options, and support for employees who feel they are being harassed, can be found in the Anti- Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Serious breaches of the Workplace Equality and Diversity Policy will constitute gross misconduct and give rise to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Anyone found guilty will be dealt with according to the disciplinary procedures laid down in national legislation.

GAIN is committed to protecting from retaliation those staff members who report what they reasonably and in good faith believe to be any instance of harassment or discrimination under the terms of this policy. 'Retaliation' or 'victimisation' means any direct or indirect action that might be recommended, threatened or taken to the detriment of an employee who engaged in reporting misconduct or who is suspected of doing so. Retaliation against a person reporting breaches of this policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal.

## 14. DEFINITIONS

- **Direct Discrimination:** takes place when a person is treated less favourably than others

(in the same circumstances) on the grounds of age, disability, sex, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, eg turning down a female applicant because she has children or is married is direct sex discrimination.

- **Indirect Discrimination:** is when a condition or requirement is applied which adversely affects one particular group more than another and cannot be strictly justified in terms of the requirements for performing the job, eg setting an age limit of between 18 and 30 without good reason may be a form of indirect sex discrimination, because it is more likely that women would have family commitments meaning that fewer women than men could comply.
- **Victimisation** occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

## 15. IMPLEMENTATION-ONGOING

In order to implement this policy GAIN will:

- communicate the policy to staff, volunteers, interns, job applicants and relevant others (such as contract or agency workers)
- provide information about the policy to all staff as part of their induction
- provide training to managers and staff in key decision-making areas on the discriminatory effects that provisions, practices, requirements, conditions and criteria can have on some groups, and the importance of being able to justify decisions to apply them
- ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion are trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques
- collect and analyse information on the ethnic and racial background, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age of each member of staff and applicants for employment, to monitor each stage of the recruitment process. The information will be held in strictest confidence and will only be used to promote equality of opportunity
- will take a flexible approach to working arrangements. Request for changes will be considered carefully and objectively
- incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff
- ensure team discussions on the policy take place. These are important to ensure key issues are explored at a local level and for creating joint ownership of the policy aims
- incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices (eg staff newsletters, intranet, posters displays etc)
- obtain commitments from other persons or organisations, such as subcontractors or

agencies, that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our employees

- consult with staff and its representatives regarding updates to the policy
- regularly review advertising, recruitment and application materials and processes, and this policy
- ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

## **16. RELATED GAIN POLICIES**

- Respect and Dignity at Work Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy (protect the needs of vulnerable communities who are served by GAIN-funded projects)
- Programmatic Gender Policy (sets out what the organisation aims to achieve in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, through the nutrition programmes it supports around the world).