



BARN OCH KVINNOR ORGANISATION

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Governing Non-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion Across Governance, Employment, Programming and Partnerships

Document Reference	Version	Date of Issue	Next Scheduled Review
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Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation (“the Organisation”) is a mission-driven non-governmental organisation dedicated to advancing the rights, safety and dignity of women and children, with particular focus on children living with disabilities, children living with HIV, marginalised women who are themselves living with disabilities or who care for children with disabilities, and widows. The Organisation holds that equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights, not discretionary privileges, and this Equal Opportunities Policy (“the Policy”) gives formal, binding effect to that conviction across every aspect of the Organisation's governance, operations and external relationships.

This Policy has been formally adopted and approved by the Board of Directors of Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation and constitutes a binding organisational instrument. It applies to, and is enforceable against, all persons acting for or on behalf of the Organisation, including employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, board members and partner organisations. It is published and made available to donors, institutional funders, regulators and members of the public in the interest of transparency, good governance and accountability.

1. Purpose and Legal Basis

This Policy is established for the following purposes:

- to embed equality, diversity, non-discrimination and inclusion as binding operational principles across every function of the Organisation;
- to ensure compliance with applicable national and international legislation governing equal treatment in employment, service delivery and public benefit activity, including anti-discrimination and human rights law in each jurisdiction in which the Organisation operates;
- to meet and, where possible, exceed the equality, safeguarding and inclusion standards required by institutional donors, including the European Union, United Nations agencies, SIDA, and other bilateral and multilateral funding partners;



- to provide a clear, consistent and enforceable framework through which instances of inequality, discrimination, harassment or exclusion may be identified, addressed and remedied; and
- to give effect to the Organisation's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Nothing in this Policy shall be construed as limiting any right or protection afforded to an individual under applicable law. Where local legislation prescribes a higher standard of protection than this Policy, the higher standard shall prevail.

2. Policy Statement

Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation is, and shall at all times conduct itself as, an equal opportunities organisation. The Organisation is unequivocally opposed to discrimination in any form — whether direct, indirect, structural or systemic — in its internal operations and in the design and delivery of its external programmes.

No individual shall be treated less favourably, excluded, disadvantaged, harassed or victimised on the basis of any protected or otherwise recognised characteristic, including, without limitation, the characteristics listed below:

• Sex, gender or gender identity	• Age
• Disability or health status	• Race, ethnicity or national origin
• Religion, faith or belief	• Marital, civil partnership or family status
• Socio-economic background	• Sexual orientation
• Pregnancy or maternity	• Political opinion or affiliation
• Refugee, asylum or displacement status	• Language or literacy level

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive. This commitment extends to every beneficiary, employee, volunteer, donor, partner, contractor and member of the public with whom the Organisation interacts, and applies equally to decisions, conduct and communications carried out on the Organisation's behalf.

3. Scope of Application

This Policy applies without exception to:

- all members of staff, including full-time, part-time, temporary, fixed-term and contracted employees;
- all volunteers, interns, consultants and board members;
- all beneficiaries and community members engaged in the Organisation's programmes;
- all institutional partners, contractors, suppliers and implementing agencies; and
- all donor-funded projects and programmes carried out under the Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation name.

The Policy governs recruitment and human resources practice, programme design and delivery, partnerships and procurement, communications and media, governance, and all donor reporting and compliance obligations.

4. Organisational Commitments

In furtherance of this Policy, the Organisation commits to the following standards across all of its activities:

Non-Discrimination in Service Delivery	All women, children and community members are entitled to access the Organisation's programmes on an equal basis, without condition or exclusion based on any personal characteristic.
Fair and Transparent Recruitment	All employment and volunteer recruitment decisions are made exclusively on the basis of merit, relevant qualifications, demonstrated competence and organisational need.
Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility	The Organisation will make all reasonable adjustments to enable persons with disabilities or other access needs to participate fully in its programmes, workplace and governance structures.
Cultural Respect and Inclusion	The Organisation respects the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of the communities it serves and integrates culturally sensitive approaches into all programme design and delivery.
Safe and Respectful Environment	The Organisation is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment, bullying, intimidation and exploitation for all who work with, or are served by, the Organisation.
Evidence-Based Monitoring	The Organisation systematically monitors its programmes and workforce data to identify and address inequalities, with findings reported transparently to donors and stakeholders.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Directors

- holds ultimate accountability for ensuring this Policy is properly implemented, monitored and enforced;
- shall promote a culture of equality, dignity and inclusion at the governance level; and
- shall review this Policy at least annually and approve any material amendments.

5.2 Senior Management

- shall translate the commitments set out in this Policy into operational procedures and programme standards;
- shall ensure that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate induction and training on this Policy;
- shall investigate reported violations promptly, impartially and in accordance with due process; and
- shall report on equality outcomes and incidents to the Board and to donors as required.

5.3 All Staff and Volunteers

- shall treat every individual with dignity, respect and fairness in all interactions;
- shall refrain from any language, behaviour or practice that could reasonably be perceived as discriminatory or exclusionary; and

- shall report any observed or suspected breach of this Policy through the Organisation's formal complaints channels.

5.4 Institutional Donors and Partners

- Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation expects all partner organisations and donor-funded implementing agencies to uphold equality standards equivalent to this Policy in all joint activities.
- Non-compliance with equality principles by a partner may constitute grounds for suspension or termination of the relevant partnership agreement.

6. Recruitment, Employment and Volunteering

All recruitment and deployment decisions within Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation, whether for paid positions, voluntary roles or board appointments, shall be governed by the following principles:

- selection criteria shall be defined objectively and applied solely by reference to the skills, qualifications, experience and competencies required for the role;
- job advertisements shall be worded inclusively and distributed through channels that maximise access for underrepresented groups;
- interview panels shall be trained in objective, unbiased assessment and, where reasonably practicable, include diverse representation;
- records of recruitment decisions shall be maintained and made available for donor review upon reasonable request; and
- the Organisation shall actively seek to increase the representation of women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups at all levels of its structure.

7. Inclusion in Programmes and Services

Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation designs and delivers its programmes in accordance with the following inclusion standards:

- all beneficiaries, regardless of ethnicity, disability, religion, displacement status or socioeconomic background, have an equal right to access and benefit from the Organisation's services;
- programme activities shall be assessed for accessibility barriers and adapted accordingly, including through the provision of interpreters, assistive resources or adjusted delivery methods;
- the specific and intersecting needs of women, girls, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups shall be explicitly considered in all programme planning; and
- community engagement processes shall be designed to be inclusive, participatory and representative of the full diversity of the communities served.

8. Prevention of Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination

Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation operates a strict zero-tolerance policy toward harassment, bullying, sexual exploitation and abuse, abuse of power, and discriminatory conduct of any kind, whether occurring in the workplace, in the field, or in any other context connected to the Organisation's activities.

Any individual — whether staff, volunteer, partner or beneficiary — who engages in such conduct shall be subject to formal disciplinary procedures, which may include dismissal or termination of engagement. Where conduct constitutes a criminal offence, the Organisation shall report the matter to the relevant statutory authorities.

All complaints shall be handled in strict confidence, with full respect for the rights and dignity of all parties involved, and shall be investigated by a designated officer within a reasonable timeframe.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Donor Reporting

Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation is committed to evidence-based accountability in the implementation of this Policy. Accordingly:

- programme data shall be disaggregated by sex, age, disability status and other relevant characteristics to track equitable access and outcomes;
- workforce composition shall be monitored and reviewed annually against equality targets;
- equality and inclusion indicators shall be incorporated into donor reports and external evaluations as standard practice;
- the Board shall receive an annual equality compliance report, which shall be made available to donors upon request; and
- feedback mechanisms accessible to beneficiaries, including those with low literacy or language barriers, shall be maintained at all programme sites.

10. Implementation and Staff Awareness

To embed this Policy effectively across the Organisation:

- all new staff, volunteers and board members shall receive a structured induction on this Policy as part of their onboarding;
- refresher training on equality, non-discrimination and inclusion shall be conducted at a minimum on an annual basis;
- this Policy shall be published on the Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation website and made available in accessible formats upon request; and
- copies of this Policy shall be shared with all partner organisations and incorporated into grant and partnership agreements.



11. Complaints, Grievance and Reporting Procedure

Any staff member, volunteer, beneficiary or external stakeholder who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment or unequal treatment in connection with Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation's activities is entitled to raise a formal complaint.

Complaints may be submitted through the following channels:

- directly to the designated Safeguarding and Complaints Officer;
- through the Organisation's confidential reporting mechanism, details of which are available from management; or
- in writing to the Board of Directors, where the complaint concerns senior management.

All complaints shall be acknowledged promptly, investigated thoroughly and impartially, and resolved in accordance with due process. Complainants shall be protected from any form of retaliation or victimisation. Where a complaint is upheld, appropriate remedial action shall be taken and documented.

12. Policy Review and Version Control

This Policy shall be subject to formal review by the Board of Directors on an annual basis, or sooner in the event of material changes to applicable law, donor requirements or organisational context. Any amendments shall be documented, dated and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

The version history of this Policy is maintained by the designated Policy Owner and is available to donors and auditors upon request.

13. Contact and Further Information

Enquiries regarding this Policy — including donor due-diligence requests, complaints, or requests for accessible formats — should be directed to the Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation management team.

This Policy has been formally approved by the Board of Directors of Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation.

Barn Och Kvinnor Organisation • Empowering Women • Protecting Children • Strengthening Communities