ELOHIM FOUNDATION

Creating Alternatives, Promoting Sustainable Development.

GENDER EQUITY PLAN

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Approved by: Board of Trustees**.**

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BACKGROUND

Elohim Foundation was formerly known as The Carpenter's Foundation International, a non-for-profit development and humanitarian organisation founded on the 13th September, 2001 in Abuja –Nigeria. The foundation is the brainchild of Dr. Ibecheole, Julius a physically challenged Nigerian, set out to tackle the challenges of human family preservation through socio-economic intervention.

The Foundation was registered with Cooperate Affairs Commission as a non-for-profit organisation on the 29th April 2002 five years after it started operation in Egbu Owerri, Imo State on 27th of August, 1997. Following its registration, the foundation officially got inaugurated in Abuja on the 13th of September, 2001. And in 2006 its operational office in Niger state was established.

In 2005, 2010 and currently in 2024 Elohim Foundation has gone through strategic structural and program reviews by external consultant development firms with intent to strengthen its operational capacity, efficiency, productivity and impact in line with its broad goals and objectives while keeping in tune to emerging trends.

Elohim Foundation therefore is a system-based organisation with a history of best practices rooted through its dynamic operational policies and regulations, providing evidenced based services to a wide range of clients across Nigeria using dynamic strategic approaches such as partnerships, social movements, advocacy, right based approach, inclusivity, evidence based, research and conferencing.

1 GOAL

To contribute to the sustainability of the human community through eradication and impact mitigation of conflict and socio-economic challenges while promoting human capacity development.

2 VISION

Intact family for Sustainable human society.

3 MISSION

To provide intervention services that addresses the challenges of conflict and sustainable human society, through people centred approaches in both development and humanitarian setting.

Elohim Foundation HR Policy Guideline

Document Control
Director, Corporate Services will be responsible for the periodic review of this document.

Document Responsibility

Title	Elohim Foundation Gender Equality Plan (GEP)
Directorate	Director General
Unit	Human Resources
Manager	The Gender Equity Social Inclusion Lead
Applicable to	All staff

Document Revision History

Version	Approved By	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1.0	Integrated Leaderships and Management Team (ILMG)	1 September 2026	New Guideline

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Overview

The purpose of this plan is to:

i. Facilitate an inclusive work environment that embraces all that makes Elohim Foundation unique and recognizes the benefits borne of this differentiation.

ii. Preserve the rich diversity within Elohim Foundation that includes nationality, language, race, ethnicity, gender, age, location, sexual orientation, personality, disability, family status or responsibilities, religion or belief, social class or any other areas of potential difference.

iii. Provide direction in favorably positioning Elohim Foundation to attract, retain and motivate a diverse and well skilled pool of talent.

iv. Foster a culture that reflects Elohim Foundation Core Values of Inclusiveness, Mutual Respect, Professionalism and Creativity.

Benefits:

Elohim Foundation recognizes the following as potential benefits of a highly diverse and inclusive workplace:

i. Increased creativity, innovation and a consistently high level of productivity driven by the high quality and diverse workforce.

ii. Improved morale and employee engagement.

iii. Improved ability to recruit and retain high quality staff members from a wide variety of backgrounds, skills, outlooks on life and experiences.

iv. Improved and supportive organization culture as a result of reduced discriminatory behaviors and conduct in the workplace.

v. Improved relationships and communication with stakeholders (local governments, donors, NGOs, partner organizations, etc.).

Expression of Commitment:

Equity –Elohim Foundation are committed to equity among its diverse workforce. Equity shall mean that all staff members, third parties, suppliers, contractors and other stakeholders receive fair treatment, that there is a transparency to cause and effect, and that consequences and rewards are clear. Equity will be expressed through unbiased access to opportunities.

Gender Parity –Elohim Foundation shall take gender parity as the process of allocating resources, research programs, and decision making fairly to both males and females without any discrimination on the basis of gender and addressing any imbalances in the benefits.

Policy

Diversity –Elohim Foundation shall take diversity as acknowledging the differences between staff members coming from a wide range of backgrounds, disciplines and experiences each bringing their own perspectives. This embodies the principle of fair treatment for all whilst understanding and respecting differences.

Inclusion –Elohim Foundation shall take inclusion as a work environment where individuals are treated with dignity and respect, where the talents and skills of different groups are valued, enabling all individuals to contribute fully towards Elohim Foundation success. No staff or partner may be barred from contributing to any piece of work undertaken by Elohim Foundation due to their differences.

The above commitments will find their articulation in all relevant aspects of the organisation, structure, process, communication and delivery of Elohim Foundation mission and mandate.

Process-related requirements:

i. **Public Document:** This document is a formal document available on the Elohim Foundation website. It was approved by Integrated Leaderships and Management Group (ILMG) and actively communicated within the institution from **1 September 2022**. It sets forward clear goals and commitment to gender equality.

ii. **Resources and Expertise:** Human Resources, the Gender Equity Social Inclusion Lead, and the Governance, Equity and Wellbeing Team lead, along with the Directors General (also representing the Integrated Leadership and Management Group (ILMG), provide the topic and organizational leadership and expertise on the implementation of the plan. Elohim Foundation shall appoint gender diversity and inclusion (GD&I) focal points in all locations where it operates

iii. **Data collection and monitoring**: The GD&I focal points shall have the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy, disseminating knowledge on GD&I as well as monitoring the work environment in their areas to assess inclusiveness and to offer suggestions on any improvements required. Implementation of the policy shall be monitored continuously, and the policy shall be reviewed regularly to ensure relevance and applicability. Quarterly reporting of Gender, Diversity and Inclusion statistics by the Human Resource Unit (HRU) to ILMG and bi-annual reporting to the Board of Trustees shall be maintained.

iv. **Training:** Elohim Foundation shall provide, relevant sensitization and training opportunities on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion, to guard against assumptions, prejudices and stereotyping that may adversely affect inclusion.

4 Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture

Elohim Foundation are committed to providing equal opportunities to staff members in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

4.1 Parental Leave Policies

Maternity Leave

Unless otherwise stipulated by local labour laws, a female staff member is entitled to maternity leave up to a maximum of three (3) months on full pay. The maternity leave may commence three weeks before expected date of delivery and end generally nine weeks after delivery.

Additional leave beyond three months to care for an infant child may be requested for as advance or unpaid leave after exhausting one's annual leave.

When applying for maternity leave the staff member must submit a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner stating the expected date of delivery.

Paternity Leave

Unless otherwise stipulated by local labour laws, a male staff member is entitled to paternity leave with full pay immediately prior to or on the day of the birth of a child, for a maximum of ten (10) working days. This leave is not part of the annual leave.

Staff shall be required to provide a copy of the notification of birth upon return from their leave.

Paternity leave shall be taken within the first 6 months of the child being born.

Adoption Leave

Unless otherwise stipulated by local labor laws, Elohim Foundation staff shall be allowed to take up to a maximum of ten (10) working days on full pay in year following adoption of a child. Adoption leave shall be taken within a period of 12 months following adoption of a child. Subject to the exigencies of service, staff members shall be entitled to adoption leave upon evidence of fully recognized adoption for children below 16 years of age.

In addition to the ten (10) working days, if the child is less than 2 years, the primary care giver may take up to fifteen (15) working days to care for and bond with their adopted child(ren) within twelve (12) months of the adoption. Staff shall be required to attach a copy of the adoption court order to their request for adoption leave.

If both spouses are staff members, each one is eligible for the adoption leave and the period of adoption leave not used by one spouse may be used by the other spouse.

Mothers of Infants and Young Children

Elohim Foundation are committed to supporting female staff to participate fully in their jobs and careers at all stages of their life. This policy is designed to address the unique needs of Elohim Foundation mothers with infants and young children. The initial months in an infant's life are critical for both bonding and infant nutrition and Elohim Foundation maternity leave policies apply in early months after delivery.

After maternity leave, when mothers return to work the following options are available:

i. Flexible hours, working from home or part-time employment – Mothers should discuss these options with their supervisor and HR if they are of interest.

ii. Virtual meeting options are encouraged to be explored to avoid unnecessary travel demands on mothers of infants and young children.

4.2 Flexible working time arrangements

Flexible hours

Elohim Foundation recognize that for certain positions' continuous staff presence in the office is not always mandatory. In such cases and at Elohim Foundation discretion, such periods shall be determined in writing by Elohim Foundation and staff may be allowed to work flexible hours. Staff members who may wish to exercise this option must submit a request in writing to their immediate supervisor. These requests should specify the reason for the request, the proposed new hours, the period, and how the duties shall be carried out without jeopardizing the staff member's professional output and their team's objectives. The supervisor must ensure that the stipulated working hours are adhered to, and performance is not jeopardized.

The approval in writing of individual arrangements rests with the relevant immediate supervisor and the supervisor's director, in consultation with the Director Corporate Services. A review is necessary every six (6) months to assess the staff member's output during the period the staff member is on flexible hours.

Working from home

Working from home may be authorized on the basis of the same conditions specified for flexible hours. A review is necessary at the discretion of Elohim Foundation and for such periods as may be determined by Elohim Foundation to assess the staff member's output during the period the staff member is working from home.

Working from Home or Other Elohim Foundation Office Location

Staff may request to work from other Elohim Foundation office locations for short term period. This may be granted at the discretion of the supervisor and/or line manager. For staff hosted by partner institutions, the period of working outside Elohim Foundation locations shall be determined by their respective letters of appointment (LOAs).

Part-time Employment

Staff may request that their regular employment contracts be reduced to less than twelve (12) months in a year to enable them to pursue individual interests for personal growth during their tenure with Elohim Foundation These reductions shall not normally exceed 6 months of the normal twelve (12) working months in a year. Such arrangements may be authorized in writing on the basis of a request that clearly specifies that:

1. There is a valid reason for the request;
2. Part-time work shall not be an impediment to the normal functioning and delivery of the expected output;
3. Proper supervision and control of professional output against indicators shall be maintained
4. The arrangement is limited in time;

The period of absence does not coincide with important institutional events being conducted virtually or face to face such as, but not limited to annual programme review and the Board of Trustees meetings.

During the period of part-time employment, payment of salary, allowances and benefits will be made on a prorated basis to reflect the staff time applicable with the exception of medical insurance, which remains intact but at the staff members' expense.

Based on organization needs and funding availability, Elohim Foundation may request that a staff member's employment contract be reduced to a period not less than six months of the normal twelve (12) months in a year. The same conditions of service above shall apply.

5 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Elohim Foundation recognizes the need to achieve gender parity and women's inclusion in decision-making not only at the top of the organization, but across all decision-making spaces, including the different thematic teams, geographic areas, and job categories. Achieving gender balance in decision-making is more than just equal or increased representation, as diverse voices ensure that decisions consider issues, experiences and impacts from different perspectives. Currently, women in particular are absent or under-represented from these higher-level decision-making spaces (e.g., the Integrated Management and Leadership Group). Therefore, this policy sets forth an intention to increase women's full participation. Elohim Foundation recognizes the organizational, structural, and cultural barriers that must change in order to support women's participation in leadership and decision-making. It is not solely an individual responsibility to become a leader, but an organizational effort to create supportive environments for women to rise to and stay in leadership positions effectively. The most critical decision-making body is the Integrated Leadership and Management Group (ILMG).

The ILMG currently consists of all 10 organizational Directors plus two HR representatives and one representative on gender. The pathways to this position thus consist of multiple specific pathways, primarily to director positions, each with its own terms of reference.

Elohim Foundation has a competency framework as a tool for staff's career path – the Director and team leadership positions represent the highest levels with different priorities for research and no research positions. Supervisors can identify potential leaders, mentor, and grow them to become future leaders.

Potential barriers for advancement to positions in ILMG include but are not limited to:

- family situation and societal pressures
- insufficient mentoring and/or an inadequately encouraging and supporting work culture
- personal choices

The specific barriers at Elohim Foundation will be explored in the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy in 2022-23.

This plan establishes a target of 50/50 gender representation in the ILMG by 2030.

Increase transparency

To increase transparency, the processes and procedures of each group are available to staff in the organizational intranet. This includes the selection and/or nomination process and criteria for being in the role as decision-maker, as well as the areas of responsibility and authority of that decision-making role. In addition, minutes of meetings, including key points of the decision and the final decision, will be available within one week of each meeting.

The processes and procedures for selection and appointments for these decision-making and leadership roles will be evaluated every two years or with significant turn over. Evaluation will identify opportunities for a more inclusive recruitment, diversity and inclusion in the decision-making process, and increased transparency.

6 Gender equality in recruitment and career progressions

Elohim Foundation are equal-opportunity employers and therefore recruitment shall be based on transparent processes, subject to open competition without distinction to gender, race, nationality religion, age or persons with special needs. The paramount consideration in employment at Elohim Foundation and and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of quality, efficiency, competence, and integrity, taking full account of Elohim Foundation commitment to diversity and inclusion within the organization. Elohim Foundation believe that diversity and inclusion contribute to their collective competitiveness and effectiveness as international research institutions.

Without prejudice to the recruitment of fresh talent at all levels, regard shall be given in filling vacancies to the requisite qualifications and experience of staff already in the service of Elohim Foundation . Where it is deemed fit, internal competitive sourcing shall be given the first opportunity to fill the vacancies at Elohim Foundation

Requests for recruitment action for all established positions shall be sent through Director Corporate Services to the HR office. The requests must be accompanied by a job description (with proposed job title and a grade), a Vacancy Authorization Form (VAF), cost estimate and budgetary code.

Elohim Foundation recognizes that there are groups that historically have been disadvantaged in the workplace and that this is not conducive to its commitment to equity or to the delivery of its mission and mandate. In order to address this, Elohim Foundation is committed to the concept of affirmative action to establish a better balance among genders, race, tribe, place of origin, residence or other local connection, political opinion, colour, creed, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, family responsibilities, sexuality, ethnicity, age or disability especially among senior researchers and managers. The nature of and time period for affirmative action will be determined by management in consultation with the HRU. Management may determine affirmative action is needed to address imbalances if other disadvantaged groups are at any point identified.

recognizing that the full development of production and livelihood options must consider the different roles of women and men. Our work aims to inform more inclusive and equitable policy and practice on the topics of governance principles and practice, rights and justice, gender and social inclusion, integrated approaches to multi-functional landscapes, and policy development and implementation.

Our research on gender and social equity under climate change addresses environmental and social trade-offs and synergies in climate policies and programmes, with the aim of discovering and scaling out rights-based solutions.

7 Measures against violence

Policy on Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is a fundamental violation of basic human rights and a crime. It takes various forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labor and human trafficking.

Elohim Foundation are committed to taking steps to ensure that the modern slavery is not taking place within their work environment.

Policy on Child Labour

Elohim Foundation have zero tolerance to exploitative child and forced labour and does not employ any person below the age of eighteen years at the workplace and prohibits the use of child labour and forced or compulsory labour at all its locations.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of Elohim Foundation HR office which will ensure that staff recruited per location are aged 18 years and above. This policy shall be clearly communicated to all Elohim Foundation staff and suppliers through induction programme and the HR policy. All employment contracts and other staff records, documenting relevant details of staff, including age shall be maintained at the HQs and all regional offices shall be open to verification by any authorized personnel or relevant statutory bodies.

During recruitment or prequalification of Elohim Foundation vendors, the HR and the Operations offices shall ensure that no minors are engaged by checking all relevant records and undertaking due diligence so that the required minimum age in Elohim Foundation hubs, regions or locations is adhered to.

Staff Welfare

The welfare of Elohim Foundation staff members is very important to the realization of Elohim Foundation and strategic goals. With this in mind, Elohim Foundation have adopted policies, which ensure conducive working conditions, fair remuneration, standard hours of work and staff engagement. This policy's aim is to address the staff welfare needs for harmonious co-existence of all Elohim Foundation staff and ensure engagement and retention.

Health and Safety

Elohim Foundation acknowledge the importance of providing a safe and healthy workplace to all its staff and will work to ensure the security and safety of staff and Elohim Foundation property including information. It is also the responsibility of the staff to take all necessary and reasonable precautions to ensure that they and their colleagues work in a safe environment. Reasonable precautions may include responsible raising of an alarm and use of protection devices (such as fire extinguishers) in the event of fire.

Policy on Safeguarding

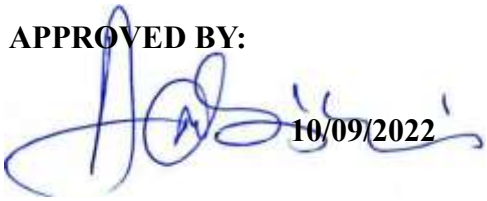
Safeguarding means promoting and protecting minors under 18 years of age and adults at risk from staff, board members, interns, students, consultants and other stakeholders (visitors, vendors, donors, partners and other persons with various interactions with Elohim Foundation working at Elohim Foundation operations and programmed activities. Safeguarding the health, well-being and human rights of minors under 18 years of age and adults at risk also means identifying and minimizing the risk of harm to this vulnerable populous.

Safeguarding includes reporting any safeguarding concerns about a child or adult at risk to the appropriate authorities (police, DCI, local law enforcement). Elohim Foundation staff members should go through this policy available on the Elohim Foundation websites and refer any questions or concerns regarding safeguarding

1 Policy Review

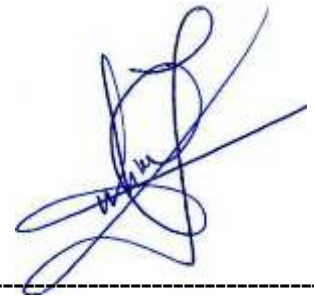
This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation, donor requirements, or organizational needs.

APPROVED BY:



10/09/2022

Mrs. Ngozi Obilor
President Board of Trustees.



10/09/2022

Dr. Ibecheole, Julius PMD. NES.
Chief Executive Officer/Founder