GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) POLICY

2018

LEGAL AID AND CONSULTANCY CENTRE (LACC)

MANBHAWAN LALITPUR, NEPAL
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1. Introduction & Scope

Legal Aid and Consultancy Centre (LACC) is a non-governmental, non-profit making, social organization founded in 1987 as a pioneer in the field of providing free legal aid and combating gender based violence for promoting women's access to justice. Prof. Dr Shanta Thapalia together with like-minded colleagues in the country endeavored to establish this organization with the goal of promoting and protecting the rights and interests of women and children in Nepal. LACC is dedicated to protect and promote the dignity, well-being and rights of women and children in Nepal. It is committed to uplifting the social, political, legal, economic and cultural status of women and children, defending their interests and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against them.

The gender equality and social inclusion policy will be an integral element that will aid LACC to ensure mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in all components of the projects/programmes. Further, the strategy will lay high attention on the need for basic area of intervention to ensure equality and inclusion ensuring that the special needs of women and other disadvantaged groups are fully incorporated in the project/programme. It will comprise introduction and scope, objectives, working strategy and monitoring measures for ensuring that inclusion of women and other disadvantaged groups are built into the project/programmes.

2. Working Strategy

As a pioneer legal resource organization, it is dedicated for the advancement and empowerment of women, development of their socio-legal status and protection of child rights. LACC’s approach to combating injustice is comprehensive and interconnected. Provision of institutional free legal aid is LACC’s core service. This service includes telephone counselling, initial psycho-social counselling, mediation, legal advice, paralegal services and case representation. LACC is committed in achieving its aims through different areas covering policy intervention, human rights training, dissemination of legal information, sensitisation, documentation, fact-finding, research, publications, advocacy campaigns, lobbying, and networking. Besides these LACC has also been involved in drafting of legislative bills and legal publication activities.

The organisation works in three levels:

Policy level
The organisation has been lobbying the Government to meet its obligations under international human rights instruments to which the Government of Nepal (GoN) is a signatory. Collaboration with likeminded organisations to influence legislative reform and
public policy, conduct research and providing legal inputs, guidance and recommendations to law makers, is yet other endeavor of LACC to pressurize Government for empowerment and equitable development.

Regional Level
At the regional level, LACC undertakes its activities such as free legal aid, advocacy cum awareness programmes, sensitization programmes, workshops, seminars and so on. The other main activity in regional level includes are training, research and publication.

Grassroots level
LACC believes that unless and until the grassroots communities are empowered, real and equitable development is far to attain. Thus keeping the motto to uplift the standard of grassroots communities, LACC has been organizing various activities from time to time. The activities LACC has been organizing in grassroots level are - awareness raising for gender sensitization, survey studies, sharing legal publications, advocacy and training on equal property rights, vital registration and citizenship rights, advocacy on sustainable development goals, legal literacy and so on.

2. The Need of GESI Policy

The principle of Gender equality and social inclusion is an integral component of the organization and its activities. It is also a means to enhance the overall success of all the programs conducted so far, including effective and accountable governance, rule of law and access to justice. In addition, recognizing the fundamental importance of women’s rights for ensuring more just and dynamic condition, LACC pursue programs that enhance women’s legal, political, and economic empowerment. Further, LACC intend to supplement the movement to value the GESI component amidst of shifting national and international context.

To meet the GESI component, LACC has been promoting an equitable society and sustainability of GESI initiatives through advocacy efforts in all its activities. LACC always design and ensures its programs benefit on behalf of poor and excluded women from marginalized communities. As part of its human recruitment policy, LACC always gives priority to women and especially people from marginalized groups. Time and again the organization is participating in various capacity enhancement trainings, both in national and international level. LACC ensures that current staff and new employees are made aware of this commitment and are encouraged to advance gender equality and social inclusion institutionally and programmatically. Legal Aid and Consultancy Centre.
strategic plan (2014-2019) explicitly recognizes gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) as integral to achieving its governance, economic growth, and human capital goals. As access to justice to historically background groups primarily women is one of the key thematic areas of LACC, it vows to integrate GESI into all its projects.

4. Objectives of GESI Policy

The one and only objective to adopt this GESI Policy is –

‘To institutionalize and internalized entire initiatives of LACC through systematic and clearGESI policy approach ‘

5. Implementation of GESI Policy

LACC will continuously emphasize in development of strong organizational support essential for the success of the GESI strategy. At the operational level, the implementation of the GESI strategy will primarily focus in relation to its objectives approaches by periodic reviews and updates and constant follow up on the GESI result. It will ensure the concerned staffs have good knowledge on GESI issues with well defined roles and responsibilities. LACC will take following strategies to implement the GESI policy,

5.1. Organizational GESI Strategy

I. Integrate gendered strategies and benchmarks into office and programmatic priorities.

II. Promote gender and social inclusion in hiring staff, senior leadership including among senior management and the Board of executives.

III. Strictly enforce LACC sexual harassment policy across the organization and provide staff with gender and social inclusion sensitivity training.

IV. Ensure that the LACC communications and outreach materials reflect our commitment to gender equality women’s empowerment and social inclusion.

V. Recognize the importance of gender-responsive international treaties and agreements, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the sustainable Development Goals, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and Security Council Resolution 1325.
5.2. Programmatic Strategies

I. Work to enhances women’s legal, political, and economic rights and promote gender equality and social inclusion.

II. Consider women’s, men’s and marginalized communities’ needs and opportunities as a dimension of our country program plans and national initiatives.

III. Strive to incorporate gender analyses and social inclusion into project and program design, implementation, and evaluation.

IV. Encourage participants, local partners and beneficiaries to integrate gender equality and social inclusion as a component of their work either as main theme or at least as cross cutting issue.

V. Ensure projects do not exacerbate or perpetuate gender and other social disparities

8. Monitoring of GESI Strategy

A GESI responsive monitoring mechanism will ensure that the different needs of women and men of excluded groups are addressed that will be inbuilt in the regular monitoring system. The monitoring mechanism will incorporate gender equality and social inclusion as one of the prime agenda. Together it will maintain disaggregated data by sex, class, caste and ethnicity. Periodic sharing of common issues and problems encountered will be conducted with close coordination of M&E Division.

Endorsed by the Executive Board on: 28th of December 2018