



Rwanda NGOs Forum on **AIDS** and  
Health Promotion (RNGOF on **AIDS&HP**)  
B.P 456Kigali – Rwanda; Tél : (+250) 0783699602  
Email: [info@rwandangoforum.rw](mailto:info@rwandangoforum.rw) or [rwandangoforumrw@gmail.com](mailto:rwandangoforumrw@gmail.com)  
Website : [www.rwandangoforum.rw](http://www.rwandangoforum.rw)

# **RNGOF on HIV/AIDS** **& HP:** **GENDER POLICY**

**2016**

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Scope .....	3
3. Staff rights and responsibilities.....	4
3.1. Additional responsibilities of Program managers and Supervisors.....	5
3.2. Unacceptable workplace conduct.....	6
3.2.1. Discrimination .....	6
<b>3.2.2. Bullying</b> .....	7
<b>3.2.3. Sexual harassment</b> .....	8
<b>3.2.4. Victimisation</b> .....	10
<b>3.2.5. Gossip</b> .....	10
<b>3.2.6. Merit at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS &amp; HP</b> .....	11
4. Resolving issues at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP .....	11

## **1. Introduction**

Rwanda NGO Forum on HIV/AIDS and Health Promotion (RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP) is an umbrella/network of local, national NGOs committed directly or indirectly to fighting against HIV/AIDS in Rwanda. It was created in 1999 and gathers more than 100 national NGOs members whose activities in fighting against HIV/AIDS and the promotion of health in Rwanda are coordinated, monitored and evaluated. The Forum is a network of National NGOs decentralized up to district level. It is also a member of the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) at National level, the Eastern Africa National Network on AIDS Service Organization (EANNASO) at the regional Level, African Council on AIDS Service organization (AFRICASO) and International Council on AIDS Service Organization (ICASO) at international level.

## **2. Rationale for the Policy Scope**

This policy applies to:

- i. All RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP staff, including: Supervisors, Program manager; interns and volunteers;
- ii. How RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP provides services to clients and how it interacts with other members of the public;
- iii. All aspects of employment, recruitment and selection; conditions and benefits; training and promotion; task allocation; shifts; hours; leave arrangements and workload;

- iv. On-site, off-site or after hours work; work-related social functions; conferences – wherever and whenever staff may be as a result of their RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP’s duties;
- v. Staff treatment of other staff, of beneficiaries, of clients, and of other members of the public encountered in the course of their RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP duties.

RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP is committed to providing a safe, flexible and respectful environment for staff and clients free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. All staff is required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Indeed, by effectively implementing this policy, we will attract and retain talented staff and create a positive environment for staff.

### **3. Staff rights and responsibilities**

All staff is entitled to:

- i. Recruitment and selection decisions based on merit and not affected by irrelevant personal characteristics;
- ii. Work free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment;
- iii. The right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised
- iv. Reasonable flexibility in working arrangements, especially where needed to accommodate their family responsibilities, disability, religious beliefs or culture.

All RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP staff must:

- i. Follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;
- ii. Offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint;
- iii. Avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures;
- iv. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

### **3.1. Additional responsibilities of Program managers and Supervisors**

The Program Manager and supervisors must also:

- i. Model appropriate standards of behaviour;
- ii. Take steps to educate and make staff aware of their obligations under this policy and the law;
- iii. Intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour;
- iv. Act fairly to resolve issues and enforce workplace behavioural standards, making sure relevant parties are heard;
- v. Help staff resolve complaints informally;
- vi. Refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to the appropriate complaint handling officer for investigation;
- vii. Ensure that employees who raises an issue or make a complaint are not victimised;
- viii. Ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit and that no discriminatory requests for information are made;
- ix. Seriously consider requests for flexible work arrangements.

## **3.2. Unacceptable workplace conduct**

Discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment are unacceptable at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP. Staff (including Project managers) found to have engaged in such conduct might be counselled, warned or disciplined. Severe or repeated breaches can lead to formal discipline up to and including dismissal.

### **3.2.1. Discrimination**

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavorably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

**Directly**, when a person or group is treated less favorably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

*For example, a worker is harassed and humiliated because of their race  
or*

*A worker is refused promotion because they are 'too old'*

**Indirectly**, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

*For example, redundancy is decided based on people who have had a worker's  
compensation claim rather than on merit.*

### **Protected personal characteristics under discrimination include:**

- i. A disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury parental status or status as a carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members;
- ii. Race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background;
- iii. Age, whether young or old, or because of age in general;
- iv. Sex;
- v. Industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union;
- vi. Religion;
- vii. Pregnancy and breastfeeding;
- viii. Marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship;
- ix. Political opinion;
- x. Social origin;
- xi. Medical record;
- xii. An association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

It is also against the law to treat someone unfavourably because you assume they have a personal characteristic or may have it at some time in the future.

#### **3.2.2. Bullying**

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic protected by equal opportunity law, it is a form of discrimination.

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people, or unfair work practices.

Under Federal law, this behaviour does not have to be repeated to be discrimination. It may be a one-off event.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- i. Sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language;
- ii. Threats, abuse or shouting;
- iii. Coercion;
- iv. Isolation;
- v. Inappropriate blaming;
- vi. Ganging up;
- vii. Constant unconstructive criticism;
- viii. Deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to do their job or access their entitlements;
- ix. Unreasonable refusal of requests for leave, training or other workplace benefits.

Bullying is unacceptable in RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP and may also be against health and safety.

### **3.2.3. Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include:

- i. Comments about a person's private life or the way they look;
- ii. Sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring;
- iii. Brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging;
- iv. Sexually suggestive comments or jokes;
- v. Displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects repeatedly;
- vi. Unwanted requests to go out;
- vii. Requests for sex;
- viii. Sexually explicit posts on social networking sites;
- ix. Insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- x. Intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life;
- xi. Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages;
- xii. Inappropriate advances on social networking sites;
- xiii. Accessing sexually explicit internet sites;
- xiv. Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour in the workplace at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.

Sexual harassment is covered in the workplace when it happens at work, at work-related events, between people sharing the same workplace, or between colleagues outside of work.

All staff and volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated.

All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require employers and managers to respond quickly and appropriately.

RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all staff and volunteers to respect other people's limits.

#### **3.2.4. Victimisation**

Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation. Victimisation is against the law.

It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in investigating an equal opportunity concern or complaint.

Victimisation is a very serious breach of this policy and is likely (depending on the severity and circumstances) to result in formal discipline against the perpetrator.

RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP has a zero tolerance approach to victimisation.

#### **3.2.5. Gossip**

It is unacceptable for staff at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP to talk with other staff members, about any complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Breaching the confidentiality of a formal complaint investigation or inappropriately disclosing personal information obtained in a professional role (for example, as a

Project manager) is a serious breach of this policy and may lead to formal discipline.

### **3.2.6. Merit at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP**

All recruitment and job selection decisions at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP will be based on merit. The skills and abilities of the candidate as measured against the inherent requirements of the position, regardless of personal characteristics.

It is unacceptable and may be against the law to ask job candidates questions, or to in any other way seek information, about their personal characteristics, unless this can be shown to be directly relevant to a genuine requirement of the position.

## **4. Resolving issues at RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP**

RNGOF ON HIV/AIDS & HP strongly encourages any staff member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, sexually harassed or victimised to take appropriate action. Staff who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance for advice and support or action their behalf.

**1. Reviewed By: Nooliet KABANYANA** Executive Secretary RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP:

Date : 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Approved By: Felicite RWEMALIKA** Chairperson Board of Directors RNGOF on HIV/AIDS & HP :

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_