



GLOBAL SCHOOL PARTNERS

Gender Equality and Equity and Disability Empowerment Policy



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www.globalschoolpartners.org.au

GENDER AND DISABILITY POLICY - 2021



Global School Partners facilitates partnerships between schools in Australia and schools in developing nations to enable students from across the globe to connect, share and learn with one another. In addition, we encourage Australians to support our work through sponsorship of students and funding of school projects and programs.

Our aim is to work collaboratively with community groups (schools) and individuals, to achieve mutually agreed goals that build capacity to both alleviate poverty through education and better health and raise awareness of how education can overcome poverty.

We inform students and school communities in Australia about the culture and circumstances experienced by students in their partner school in the developing country. We empower Australian students to make a positive, direct and tangible difference in the lives of students at their partner school.

Global School Partners' Commitment to Gender Equality and Equity and Disability Empowerment

Discrimination, inequality, and injustice are major causes of poverty worldwide, and women, girls and people with a disability often bear the brunt of this. Statistically, you are more likely to be living in poverty if you are a woman or have a disability. USAID (2020)¹, reports that in Kenya, women are far less likely to represent in parliament, receive an education or have positive health outcomes.

We base our definition of Gender equality upon that in the Federal Sex Discrimination Act (1984)², which defines sex discrimination as the act of a person who discriminates against another person on the ground of the sex of the aggrieved person if, by reason of:

- (a) the sex of the aggrieved person;
- (b) a characteristic that appertains generally to persons of the sex of the aggrieved person; or
- (c) a characteristic that is generally imputed to persons of the sex of the aggrieved person.

The discriminator treats the aggrieved person less favourably than, in circumstances that are the same or are not materially different, the discriminator treats or would treat a person of a different sex.

Gender and disability continue to display obvious disadvantages for women. It is found that:

- Girls are more likely than boys to never set foot in a classroom. Of the 758 million adults who lack basic reading and writing skills, two thirds are women. ([UNESCO](#), 2014³)
- One in three women have experienced sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. In some countries, 70% of women experience this kind of violence. ([WHO](#), 2017⁴)
- Worldwide, women are in the lowest-paid work. Globally, they earn 32% less than men. (WEF, 2018)⁵

Global School Partners endeavours to break this cycle, by giving girls and students with a disability the opportunity to participate as equals in school, to gain an education, and thereby provide the opportunity for a future which includes meaningful work, access to healthcare and other fundamental human rights.

This Gender Equality and Equity and Disability Empowerment Policy (hereafter known as Gender and Disability Policy) has been developed to provide a practical guide for Global School Partners programs.

Note: In addition, refer to Global School Partners Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy (PSEAH), Global School Partners PSEAH Risk Management document and Global School Partners Child Safeguarding Policy.

¹ USAID, 2020

² Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984

³ UNESCO, 2014

⁴ WHO, 2017

⁵ WEF, 2018

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Our organisational commitment to gender and disability equality

Global School Partners is committed to gender and disability equality by aligning with the United Nation's position:

- We are committed to the Beijing Platform of Action (1995)⁶ to promote Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.
- We are committed to fulfilling the UN's sustainable development goals (Goal 5) to help achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)⁷ and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace & Security. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.
- We endeavour to be a part of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2008)⁸, to contribute to the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

Our commitment is to uphold and offer opportunities where reasonably able, to give students who may have a disability or are female, a chance for work and education where they may not be able to in usual circumstances.

Planning and consultation processes

Global School Partners planning processes includes consultation with those marginalised due to their gender and disability, to identify, contextualise and analyse the barriers to their inclusion and identify opportunities for their equal inclusion and participation.

At Global School Partners, we believe that achieving equality begins by giving women, girls and persons with a disability, the same opportunities to learn as fully abled males. In Kenyan societies, women and those with a disability are significantly under-represented in leadership positions and are prone to living in poverty. Therefore, Global School Partners is committed to providing scholarship opportunities to students who are disadvantaged based on disability or gender.

We commit to doing this by;

- **Empowering young women** – In a family where there are both male and female children, we will offer scholarships to the female to empower their future, and by doing so, supporting their family through the child's scholarship.
- **Education for disabled children** – When students ability to learn is hindered by accessibility, physical limitations or other unavoidable circumstances, Global School Partners will attempt to provide educational opportunities for these students through means of infrastructure improvements, scholarship grants and alternative content delivery strategies.

⁶ Beijing Platform of Action, 1995

⁷ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000

⁸ UNCRPS, 2008

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Participation in decision making and organisational activities

Global School Partners provides opportunities for those marginalised due to their gender or disability, in particular women and girls, to participate in decision-making and organisational activities.

Employment Opportunities for Women

Global School Partners supports the hire and management of female staff and teachers in the schools we partner with. In addition, Global School Partners supports school staff who may be at some disadvantage due to disability to the extent our resources allow.

Champion the Disadvantaged

Global School Partners actively encourages sponsors to provide scholarships to students in greater disadvantage, with an emphasis on girls and women, or children with a disability, over other scholarship opportunities. We do this by:

Empowering young women – Ensuring the percentage of girls and women sponsored exceed that of boys and men receiving assistance. This includes continuing to seek out new students in need of scholarships.

Education for disabled children – Global School Partners takes reasonable measures, where financially and logistically possible, to increase accessibility for students who may be disadvantaged by a physical disability.

These commitments are based on the Commonwealth Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999) . Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Monitor and evaluate

Global School Partners monitors and evaluates the progress of the organisation in promoting gender equality and equity.

In alignment with Section 13 of the Commonwealth Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999), Global School Partners evaluates the outcomes of gender equality activities, the actions taken, and bases future plans on this analysis to address issues identified.

The pathway followed aligns with Section 61 of the Disability discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) notes that a disability action plan must include provisions relating to: (a) the devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of this Act; (b) the communication of these policies and programs to persons within the action planner; (c) the review of practices within the action planner with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices; (d) the setting of goals and targets, where these may reasonably be determined against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of the Act may be assessed; (e) the means, of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (a); and (f) the appointment of persons within the action planner to implement the provisions referred to in points (a) to (e) (inclusive).

The reporting of gender and disability inclusion initiatives will be periodically reported to the public in newsletters, email, social media and other communication channels.

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Working with our partners

Global School Partners works with partner organisations in-country, such as GSP-Kenya Chapter and Kenyan Partner Schools.

These partner organisations are required to comply with the Global School Partners Gender and Disability Policy and this is included in the Memorandum of Understanding between Global School Partners and our partner organisations.

Global School Partners is committed to working with our partner organisations to build awareness of discrimination, inequality and injustice. In addition, to assisting with tools, training and resources to reduce discrimination, inequality and injustice.

Regular reviews of the Gender and Disability Policy

The leadership team reviews the Gender and Disability Policy annually.

Incident reporting

Incident reports relating to discrimination, inequality and injustice based on gender and disability may be raised by any stakeholders and Global School Partners commits to investigating these reports as a high priority.

The guiding principles of the incident reporting process are;

- safeguarding of all parties involved in the complaint of concern
- confidentiality (as distinct from secrecy)
- expedient reporting
- truthfulness
- fairness
- professionalism

Incident reporting process must always comply with relevant legislation, including compliance with mandatory reporting responsibilities in the applicable jurisdiction (either Australia or in-country). Reporting can occur via:

- email to admin@globalschoolpartners.org.au
- website at <https://www.globalschoolpartners.org.au/contact>

On receipt of an incident report from the appointed incident reporting focal person, Global School Partners CEO will inform the Board Safety Committee chair. The Chair will seek to verify the facts around the report and, as needs be, call a Safety Committee meeting. The Safety Committee, upon verification of the facts, will take action as required.

The MoU signed with school partners includes a clause that requires them to report any known breaches of the Gender and Disability Policy.

Child-friendly complaints handling process

Investigated by the Program Officer, visits the children and is known to them, she is independent of the GSP Partner Schools.

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NOTE: The Program Officer works with the children on a monthly basis and is trained in childhood education. The Program Officer has the trust and communication skills to relate in a child-friendly manner with children using verbal, writing or drawing communication techniques.

Children can report to their school (if it is about the Program Officer) and they are obliged to report complaints to GSP in the MoU. GSP Board will then determine process for investigating and handling the complaint. Refer GSP Governance Policy for detail on complaints handling policy.

Related Policies:

Governance Policy
PSEAH Policy
Child Safeguarding Policy
Activity Development Policy
Human Relations Policy
Memorandum of Understanding



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