



Small Scale Livestock
and Livelihoods
Program Equality and
Diversity Policy



1. Introduction:

SSLLP is an equal opportunity organization accepting the diversity within our employee profile, beneficiaries, and partners. We believe that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of their religion, beliefs, age, gender, race, disability or sexual orientation.

SSLLP recognizes that we live in a society where discrimination still operates to the disadvantage of many groups in society. SSLLP believes that all persons should have equal rights to recognition of their human dignity, and to have equal opportunities to be educated, to work, receive services and to participate in society.

SSLLP is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities through the way we manage the organisation and provide services to the communities we serve. In order to express this commitment, we develop, promote and maintain policies conducive to the principles of fairness and equality in the workplace.

The objective of this policy is that no person should suffer or experience less favourable treatment, discrimination or lack of opportunities on the grounds of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, health status, HIV status, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, political beliefs or trade union membership, class, responsibility for dependents, physical attributes, ex-offender status, lack of formal qualifications where such qualifications are not formally required, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of this policy.



This policy will influence and affect every aspect of activities carried out at SSLPP i.e. promotional work, educational services, casework and other functions linked to the SSLPP, as determined by the management committee.

In the provision of services and the employment of staff, SSLPP is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone. Throughout its activities, SSLPP will treat all people equally whether they are:

- Seeking or using our services.
- Applying for a job or already employed by us.
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements.
- Volunteer workers.



2. Policy statement:

SMALL SCALE LIVESTOCK AND LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM (SSLLP) exists to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied. Promoting equality and valuing diversity are fundamental to the vision and mission of SSLLP.

The principles of inclusiveness, tolerance and fairness are central to our legitimacy as an organisation that promotes sustainable livelihoods for all, without discrimination.

This policy exists to ensure equal access to the employment and service opportunities that are available in every dimension of our work.

SSLLP will not accept unfair discrimination or less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity or trade union activity (see section 6 for definitions) as an employer or in the running of our organisation.

This policy is fully supported by SSLLP's Trustees, Board of Directors, Directors and senior management team who have given clear direction and leadership that promoting equality is a priority of SSLLP's approach.

The commitments in this policy underpin all other SSLLP policies.



3. Policy Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to create an organisation where;

- Every person is able to give of their best.
- Decisions are fair and based on merit, competence and potential.
- In our work we take account of individuals' experiences and needs.
- Unfair discrimination is not tolerated.

We understand that to do this we will need to address the root causes and impacts of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as the indirect discrimination that can unintentionally arise from our policies, practices and procedures.

Through this policy we also aim to;

- Attract and retain members, supporters, activists, staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors, consultants and visitors that reflect the diverse communities in which we operate and who are committed to our equality principles.
- Build an organisational culture that is tolerant, open and inclusive and where people feel safe, where differences are accepted, engagement is apparent and the contributions of all are encouraged, valued and respected.
- Mainstream equality into every aspect of our work including employment fundraising, campaigning, marketing, publishing, events, procurement and facilities management so that we can meet the needs of all our stakeholders.



The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to ensure that No applicant, employee or customer will receive less favourable treatment or be subjected to any form of discrimination. All employees and customers will be given the help they need to attain their full potential wherever that is possible. We secure the best employees for our needs by accessing all sections of the community. We achieve an ability-based workforce that is in line with the working population mix.

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, which may result in immediate termination of employment or contract, withdrawal of volunteer status, and reporting to the police, relevant regulatory authority or other body.



4. Policy Implementation:

In order to translate this policy into action we will;

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants, volunteers and relevant others.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques.
- Incorporate equal opportunity notices into general communications practices.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.
- Consult, engage with, and learn from our stakeholders in the development and delivery of an equality action plan and on our work more broadly.
- Monitor and collect evidence on the impact of our policies, practices, procedures and workplace cultures on equality issues.
- Implement tailored positive actions to respond to the evidence we collect.
- Levelling the playing field for disabled people through the provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals
- Train our staff and volunteers, including board members and consultants working with SSSLP for more than a month to carry out this policy and embed equality principles into all relevant training including



induction.

- Communicate this policy to all our stakeholders so that they are aware of our commitment to treat them fairly and their obligation to operate in line with this policy.
- Take appropriate action when incidents occur which breach this policy (see section 8).
- Regularly monitor and review the success of this policy in promoting equality and evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of our action plan.

The Executive Director, or anyone he delegates to, has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each head of department also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

All staff and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. SSLLP will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- making threats
- physical violence
- shouting
- swearing at others
- persistent rudeness
- isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- telling offensive jokes or name calling
- displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist / racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email / text message or any other format.
- any other forms of harassment or victimisation.



The items on the above list of unacceptable behaviours are considered to be disciplinary offences within SSLPP and can lead to disciplinary action being taken. SSLPP does, however, encourage staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

Complaints of discrimination

SSLPP will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, trustees, clients or other third parties and will act where appropriate.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by staff, volunteers, clients and other third parties.



5. Our Legal Duties and Obligations:

This policy is the instrument through which SSLPP will comply with its obligations as an employer and a service provider as set out in different Acts and Laws of the Republic of Malawi. As such all our stakeholders need to understand the protections and obligations conferred on them by all relevant legislation. **The following legislation is relevant and applicable:**

- The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi
- The Work and Families Act 2006.
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).

The purpose of the Act is that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using services. It protects people from discrimination by employers and service providers on the basis of nine protected characteristics;

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex/Gender
- Sexual orientation

4.4 Trade union representatives and members also have legal protection



against unfair treatment on the ground of trade union activity. We will not treat employees unfairly on the grounds of trade union membership or non-membership. Unfair treatment includes dismissal and subjecting employees to detrimental treatment. We respect the right of staff to join a trade union of their choosing if they so wish.

4.5 The Equality Act protects our members, activists, staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors, consultants and visitors against;

- **Direct discrimination:** This occurs where, because of a protected characteristic, a person receives worse treatment than someone who does not have that characteristic. For example, an employee is turned down for a job because their manager believes that their sexual orientation will prevent them gaining their team's respect. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
- **Discrimination by association:** This is discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, a cis-gendered man is treated less favourably at an event because of his friendship with a trans man.
- **Perception discrimination:** This is discrimination against an individual because others think (incorrectly) that they possess a protected characteristic. For example, an employee is not offered the chance to represent her company at a major event because her line manager believes she has mental health issues.
- **Indirect discrimination:** This occurs when there is a policy or a practice that applies to everyone but which particularly



disadvantages people with a protected characteristic compared with people who do not have that characteristic. For example, including unnecessary criteria, that are more difficult for people with a particular protected characteristic to meet, in a person specification for a job.

- **Harassment:** This is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual (See SSLLP's bullying and harassment policy).
- **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else because they have complained about discrimination, or are suspected of doing so or have supported someone else who has.

Disabled people are specifically protected against discrimination 'arising from disability'. For example they would be protected from an employer penalising them from taking regular comfort breaks to manage chronic pain when they would reasonably be expected to know that the employee has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Disabled people also have a legal right to reasonable adjustments from their service provider or employer. For example, through the provision of specific software, furniture or lighting.

A person is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory



maternity leave to which they are entitled. For more information see SSSLP's maternity policy.

Finally, it would be discrimination to treat someone less favourably for being absent from work in connection with gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.

We expect our activists, staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors, consultants and visitors to behave in accordance with the above provisions.

We will make our commitment to equality clear in our working with members, supporters and donors,

Beyond Compliance with the Law

Gender Mainstreaming was identified as an organisational priority in the SSSLP Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024.



6. Definitions and Further Explanations:

This policy is based on the following definitions and explanations.

Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means has lasted, or is expected to last, for 12 months. Included in this definition are:

- Physical impairments (including asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc).
- Sensory impairments such as hearing impairment or visual impairment.
- Severe facial disfigurement.
- Progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection.
- People who have had an impairment in the past but have since recovered (such as cancer, mental health issues).

SSLLP supports the social model of disability that states that disability is created by society's barriers and not by particular medical conditions or impairments. Removing these barriers, which disable people who have impairments, can therefore reduce disability.

Barriers can be:

- Prejudice and stereotypes
- Inflexible organisational procedures and practices
- Inaccessible information
- Inaccessible building



- Inaccessible transport

Equality - a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts.

Discriminatory abuse – abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.

Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse – includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or



scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Psychological abuse - includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include not giving a vulnerable person opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.

Child – SSSLP regards a child as anyone under the age of 18 years,



irrespective of the age of majority in the region in which the child lives. It is widely recognised that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, social and economic status, developmental stage, and dependence on others.

Vulnerable person/people – for the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term which covers children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable adult - a person, 18 years and above, who by reason of disability, age, gender, social and economic status, or illness, the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect him or herself against abuse, harm or exploitation.

Youth or young people - individuals aged 16 to 35 (Malawi National Youth Policy) – SSSLP recognises that this group spans the categories of ‘children and ‘adults’ but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.

7. Roles and Responsibilities:

7.1. Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds ultimate accountability for this policy.

7.2. The Board of Directors:

SSLLP Board's responsibility is to;

- Own and monitor implementation of this policy



7.3. SSLLP Director's responsibility is to;

- Take responsibility for delivery of this policy.
- Provide strong leadership on equality.
- Drive delivery of the Equality Action Plan.
- Work closely with the Equality Leadership Committee to monitor progress

7.4. Our Senior Management and Leadership Team's responsibility is to;

- Act as equality champions and role models.
- Implement this policy and integrate equality into the work of SSLLP.
- Approve the Equality Action Plan and oversee its implementation.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are fully aware of their individual and collective responsibilities under this policy.
- Prioritise attendance at equality training to equip staff, volunteers and consultants working with us for over a month with the competences needed to comply with this policy and deliver the action plan.
- Respond to allegations of discrimination and harassment fairly, quickly and effectively.

7.5. Our Finance and Administration team's responsibility is to;

- Provide equality induction, equality training and other development opportunities to build equality competence and ensure all are attended.
- Investigate and deal promptly with any incidents or individual behaviours that contravene this policy.



- Produce timely, accurate and appropriate equality management information on staff and volunteers, including the Board, to inform decision-making.
- Create and deliver initiatives that will translate this policy into positive action.
- Set up effective systems to ensure that positive action on equality is continuously evaluated and improved.
- The Head of Human Resources is responsible for raising staff & volunteer awareness of their responsibilities under equality and diversity legislation.

7.6. Our line managers' responsibility is to;

- Build specific actions into their team and individual's goals that contribute to the delivery of this policy as part of the organisational, individual and project planning processes.
- Support staff, volunteers and consultants to prioritise delivery of the equality action plan.
- Check that staff, volunteers and consultants are aware of this policy and understand their rights and responsibilities contained within it.
- Role model behaviour that supports this policy and challenge those they manage to do the same.
- Allocate their time and support and any training or development opportunities objectively, fairly and without discrimination.
- Communicate regularly with their teams about equality issues in a way that keeps this policy and its action plan live and central to our mission.



7.7. All staff have a responsibility to;

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Report discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment or harassment that they experience or witness
- Help identify discriminatory practices or procedures and bring these to the attention of their line managers, union representatives, or HR.
- Contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment that values difference.
- Attend mandatory staff training and development events.
- Express opinions constructively with sensitivity and respect.
- Support the work of the Equality and Diversity group when required.
- Play an active part in delivering the Equality Action Plan.

7.8. Our volunteers' roles are to

- Play their part in creating an environment where people are valued and respected.
- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Report discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment or harassment that they experience or witness
- Help identify discriminatory practices or procedures and bring these to our attention.
- Express opinions constructively with sensitivity and respect.

7.9. Our service providers', contractors' and consultants' responsibility are to operate within the requirements of the Constitution of Malawi, the Laws of Malawi and the terms of this policy. A copy of this Equality and Diversity Policy will be given to all contractors and



consultants and an assessment of their commitment to complying will form part of any formal tendering process.

8. Monitoring and Implementation:

Ultimate responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy rests with the SSLPP Executive Director. However each and every individual involved in SSLPP needs to play their part in translating policy into practice.

SSLPP will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy. **Monitoring may involve:**

- The collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applications and current employees;
- The examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
- Recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

On a day-to-day basis breaches of this policy could occur at a number of levels some requiring a more urgent response than others

If staff or volunteers find examples of indirect discrimination in SSLPP policies and procedures you should bring this to the attention of your line



manager and / or the Union. They can then consider the issue and respond as appropriate.

Members, supporters, activists, contractors, consultants and visitors should speak to, their named contact at SSLPP, the supporter care team, the nearest member of staff or use the existing feedback process depending on the seriousness and urgency of the issue.

Should staff or volunteers experience or witness more severe breaches of this policy, perhaps involving direct discrimination against an individual or bullying and harassment then you have a number of options including:

- speaking to the individual(s) involved
- contacting The Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director
- Talking to your line manager
- Whichever option you chose you are strongly encouraging to act.

Cases of this nature will then most likely be dealt with through SSLPP's grievance, disciplinary, whistle blowing, or bullying and harassment policies.

We will act where needed to address any inequalities that are surfaced through the implementation of this policy.

A formal annual review of the policy and action plan will be led by the HR team with the Union, and agreed by SMT for reporting to the Board. The review will focus on tracking progress, identifying challenges to delivery and devising ways to overcome these as well as checking that the policy aims and actions remain relevant.





9. SSLPP Policies that Support Equality and Diversity:

Although the principles set out in this policy underlie all our policies at SSLPP, it should be particularly be read in conjunction with the following policies:

a) Staff

- Bullying and Harassment
- Recruitment and Selection
- Flexible working
- Childcare
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption
- Retirement

b) Volunteers

- Volunteer Policy

c) Consultants and contractors

- Code of Conduct

d) Activists

- Activists' Code of Conduct