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## **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming Policy in Public Institutions: A Case Study of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Solwezi District**

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### **Abstract**

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy (GMP) within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in Solwezi District, focusing on its integration and impact on promoting gender equality. A descriptive case study design was employed, with a purposive sampling technique selecting 40 participants, including senior and middle managers, operational staff, and gender focal points. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, which included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings reveal mixed results regarding the policy's implementation. While 56.67% of departments had designated gender focal points, 43.33% of departments lacked dedicated gender representatives. Furthermore, only 60% of respondents reported the consistent use of gender-sensitive tools in their work processes. The majority of respondents (62.5%) rated the effectiveness of the policy as moderate or low, highlighting the need for more robust

policy enforcement. Key factors limiting successful implementation included cultural barriers (45%), inadequate training (38%), limited funding (50%), and weak enforcement mechanisms (40%). The GMP has made moderate progress in promoting gender equality, particularly in leadership representation and workplace policies. However, substantial gaps persist, and the policy's impact is inconsistent across departments. To enhance the policy's effectiveness, the study recommends strengthening policy integration through the adoption of standardized tools, ensuring gender focal points in all departments (100%), increasing funding for gender initiatives (by at least 30%), expanding leadership and mentorship programs, addressing cultural barriers, and standardizing monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Implementing these measures could significantly improve the integration and impact of the GMP, ensuring sustained progress in gender equality across public institutions.

**Keywords:** Gender Mainstreaming Policy, Zambia, Gender Equality, Public Institutions, Implementation Challenges

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background**

Gender mainstreaming is a globally recognized strategy for achieving gender equality by incorporating gender perspectives into policymaking and institutional practices. First formalized during the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, it remains a cornerstone in addressing systemic inequalities that limit equitable opportunities for men and women (UN Women, 2023). Its significance is reinforced by frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls by tackling disparities in social, economic, and political spheres (United Nations, 2024).

In Zambia, gender mainstreaming efforts are guided by international commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the National Gender Policy revised in 2014. This policy demonstrates the government's resolve to integrate gender considerations across key sectors, including education, health, governance, and public services (Ministry of Gender, 2014). These initiatives aim to promote equitable opportunities and eliminate gender-based barriers to development. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services plays a central

role in implementing gender mainstreaming policies in Zambia. By focusing on community empowerment, equitable access to social services, and gender-responsive programs, the Ministry contributes to national efforts to foster inclusivity and reduce inequalities, ensuring that gender considerations are embedded in the country's development agenda.

Despite Zambia's adoption of gender mainstreaming frameworks, implementation continues to face significant challenges. Key issues include inadequate funding, weak institutional capacity, limited personnel training, and resistance rooted in entrenched cultural norms that sustain gender stereotypes (Lungu & Ngoma, 2022). Additionally, the lack of robust sex-disaggregated data and effective monitoring systems has impeded evidence-based decision-making and policy adjustments, mirroring broader challenges in African public institutions where gender-sensitive practices are inconsistently applied (UNDP, 2023; Nkomeshya, 2021).

To address these barriers, participatory and context-sensitive approaches have gained traction. Evidence suggests that involving stakeholders at all levels, especially within local communities, enhances the sustainability and relevance of gender-responsive initiatives (Sida, 2022). Such strategies emphasize the importance of tailored interventions that reflect the unique social and cultural contexts of their implementation.

This study investigates the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming policies within Zambia's Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in Solwezi District. It examines the integration of gender perspectives into institutional practices, assesses the impact on reducing gender disparities, and identifies strategies for overcoming implementation challenges. By aligning policy objectives with measurable outcomes, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations to strengthen gender-sensitive practices and advance gender equality in Zambia's public sector.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite Zambia's adoption of the National Gender Policy (2014) and commitments to international frameworks like CEDAW, gender disparities remain pronounced in public institutions. In Solwezi District's Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, gender mainstreaming efforts are inconsistent, with female representation in decision-making roles as low as 20% (Central Statistical Office, 2023). This stark imbalance undermines the Ministry's ability to deliver inclusive and gender-sensitive services, highlighting a gap between policy goals and practical outcomes (Mukosha & Mulenga, 2019).

The persistence of gender gaps in public institutions hampers Zambia's progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, which emphasizes gender equality. The limited presence of women in leadership roles restricts the Ministry's capacity to address gender-specific needs effectively, diminishing its responsiveness and overall efficiency in serving diverse community groups. These challenges underscore the urgent need for robust gender mainstreaming to ensure social services are equitable and inclusive.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in Solwezi's Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, identifying barriers to its

implementation and proposing actionable solutions. By addressing these gaps, the research seeks to foster more inclusive public institutions, enhance social equity, and contribute to sustainable gender-responsive development in Zambia.

## 1.3 Objectives of the study

The study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy in public institutions, particularly focusing on the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in Solwezi District. The specific objectives include evaluating how well the policy has been integrated into operations and decision-making, examining its impact on promoting gender equality, and identifying the key factors that contribute to its successful implementation.

## 1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two theoretical frameworks: Gender and Development (GAD) Theory and Institutional Theory. GAD Theory, which advocates for structural changes to address gender inequality, emphasizes the need for reshaping organizational structures to achieve genuine gender equality (Razavi & Miller, 1995). This aligns with the study's objective of assessing how gender mainstreaming has been integrated into operational activities within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services.

Institutional Theory, which examines how organizations adopt policies based on external pressures and norms, further informs the analysis (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). It helps explain the impact of gender mainstreaming on promoting gender equality by considering pressures from international mandates and societal expectations (Scott, 2014). Additionally, it aids in understanding the factors affecting the policy's successful implementation, such as organizational culture, leadership, and resources (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Together, GAD and Institutional Theory provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating gender mainstreaming in public institutions, offering insights into both internal practices and external influences on policy outcomes.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Integration of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy into Institutional Activities and Decision-Making

The integration of gender mainstreaming policies into institutional activities and decision-making has been extensively studied globally, highlighting successes and challenges. The UNDP emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement, showing that active collaboration among policymakers, NGOs, and gender specialists leads to more inclusive and accountable policy outcomes (UNDP, 2021)<sup>[28]</sup>. The OECD advocates for data-driven approaches, with gender-disaggregated data improving decision-making and ensuring targeted interventions (OECD, 2022)<sup>[24]</sup>. EIGE stresses the role of organizational culture, noting that training and leadership commitment enhance policy integration (EIGE, 2023)<sup>[11]</sup>.

Numerous case studies reveal varying degrees of success across regions. In India, while gender mainstreaming is acknowledged, it faces challenges such as insufficient training and lack of gender-specific action plans (Yadav *et al.*, 2023). In China, local government institutions face budgetary constraints, but dedicated gender units improve

policy integration (Chen & Wong, 2022) <sup>[8]</sup>. Research in Pakistan's education sector highlights the gap between policy and practice due to resistance and resource limitations (Ahmed & Khan, 2021) <sup>[4]</sup>.

In Ethiopia and Kenya, gender mainstreaming policies exist but are often under-implemented due to lack of training, resources, and leadership commitment (Abebe *et al.*, 2022; Nyamweya & Otieno, 2023 <sup>[23]</sup>). Similarly, in Nigeria and Ghana, limited funding and cultural resistance hinder effective integration, while institutions in Tanzania and Zimbabwe struggle with entrenched gender stereotypes and insufficient accountability mechanisms (Adebayo *et al.*, 2023; Mensah & Osei, 2022 <sup>[14]</sup>; Kilonzo & Makena, 2021 <sup>[13]</sup>; Ncube & Sibanda, 2023 <sup>[19]</sup>).

Several studies have assessed gender mainstreaming in different sectors in Malawi and Zambia, revealing both progress and challenges in policy implementation. Banda and Phiri (2023) <sup>[5]</sup> evaluated Malawi's Ministry of Health, finding that while gender dynamics were considered in health programs, decision-making lacked gender representation. Barriers included inadequate funding, limited awareness, and societal norms. They recommended advocacy campaigns, increased funding, and gender focal points in decision-making. Chileshe and Mwiinga (2023) <sup>[9]</sup> focused on gender mainstreaming in Zambia's municipal councils, noting that while gender policies were included in strategic plans, their operational implementation was inconsistent. Challenges included inadequate gender-specific budgeting, limited awareness, and weak enforcement, with recommendations for gender-responsive budgeting and enhanced training on gender equality. Banda and Zulu (2022) <sup>[6]</sup> studied Zambia's Ministry of Education, particularly in secondary schools, revealing gaps in teacher training and curriculum content related to gender equality. Resistance from some educators and traditional norms hindered implementation. They suggested mandatory gender training for teachers and the creation of monitoring committees.

Mwamba and Simukonda (2021) <sup>[16]</sup> assessed Zambia's Ministry of Health in rural clinics, finding gender mainstreaming in maternal and child health programs but less in other healthcare services. Barriers included a lack of gender-sensitive indicators and cultural biases. They recommended increased funding and local community involvement in policy implementation.

## 2.2 The effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy on promoting gender equality

The UNECA (2023) <sup>[29]</sup> report assessed gender mainstreaming efforts in 20 Sub-Saharan African countries, noting significant progress in countries like Namibia and Senegal, but ongoing challenges in conflict-affected nations like Chad and Somalia. Successful nations adopted gender-sensitive budgeting and policies, but the report called for regional cooperation and better monitoring to address uneven progress. Phiri *et al.* (2023) <sup>[25]</sup> studied Zambia's public sector, focusing on the Ministry of Gender and Child Development, finding progress in aligning with international gender frameworks but noting challenges like inadequate funding, human resources, and political will, particularly in rural areas. The study emphasized the need for stronger institutional frameworks and gender-sensitive practices at all levels of governance. Mulenga and Mwale (2022) <sup>[15]</sup> examined Zambia's education sector, finding improvements

in girls' enrollment through initiatives like GEWEL. However, challenges such as cultural norms, early marriages, and inadequate facilities persist, requiring continued investment in infrastructure and legal frameworks to address these barriers.

Chanda *et al.* (2023) <sup>[7]</sup> studied Zambia's health sector and found that gender-sensitive training improved reproductive health services in urban areas, but rural regions faced significant challenges like inadequate healthcare facilities and contraceptive access. The study called for increased investment in rural healthcare infrastructure and gender awareness programs. Ngoma and Banda (2023) <sup>[20]</sup> investigated Zambia's agricultural sector, noting improvements in women's access to training and credit. However, barriers like limited land ownership and cultural norms restricted decision-making power. They recommended stronger legal frameworks for land rights and more investment in women-focused agricultural programs. Moyo and Nkhata (2023) <sup>[18]</sup> explored women's representation in Zambia's judiciary, finding progress in lower courts but challenges in higher courts due to cultural biases and limited mentorship. They advocated for affirmative action policies and mentorship programs to achieve gender parity in the judiciary. Ng'andu and Phiri (2021) <sup>[21]</sup> studied community engagement in rural Zambia, highlighting the role of grassroots advocacy in addressing harmful practices like early marriages. They recommended scaling up awareness campaigns and training traditional leaders to improve policy communication.

In Ethiopia (2023), gender-sensitive agricultural policies improved women's access to land and resources, boosting economic outcomes for women-headed households. However, unequal access to extension services and underrepresentation in decision-making persisted, calling for greater inclusion in agricultural policy-making. A 2022 study in Kenya showed that gender-sensitive maternal health policies contributed to a decline in maternal mortality, particularly in community-based healthcare areas. Despite this, logistical challenges and cultural resistance in rural regions limited effectiveness.

In Nigeria (2022), gender quotas increased women's political representation, but societal resistance and lack of support for women's campaigns persisted, requiring stronger institutional support and cultural change for gender mainstreaming to be fully effective. A 2021 study in South Africa found that gender mainstreaming in employment, such as equal pay initiatives, improved women's participation in the formal workforce. However, gaps in the informal sector remained, calling for policies to address these inequalities. In Tanzania (2021), gender-sensitive water and sanitation policies, such as women's inclusion in water management, improved health outcomes but were hindered by traditional gender roles limiting women's decision-making power. In Zambia (2023), gender-responsive policies in education, healthcare, and agriculture led to positive outcomes, such as increased female enrollment and better healthcare access. However, cultural resistance, early marriages, and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas remained challenges.

## 2.3 Factors Influencing the Successful Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The World Bank's journey with gender mainstreaming highlights both progress and challenges in integrating

gender considerations into global policy frameworks. Despite adopting comprehensive strategies like Gender Action Plans and the 2012 World Development Report, implementation gaps persist. Key issues include the tendency to align gender policies with economic outcomes, often sidelining transformative feminist goals. Studies across various countries highlight both progress and challenges in gender mainstreaming efforts. In Bangladesh, a study by Hossain *et al.* (2023)<sup>[12]</sup> found improvements in healthcare access, such as increased antenatal care visits and reduced maternal mortality, but noted barriers like gender-insensitive policies, insufficient funding, and a lack of female leadership in healthcare. The study recommended increasing female healthcare providers and integrating gender perspectives in health policy planning. Adeyemi and Okonkwo (2023)<sup>[3]</sup> studied gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's political landscape and found that while women's political participation has increased, only 6.7% of legislative seats are held by women. Structural and societal barriers, including patriarchal norms and gender-based violence, were identified as significant obstacles. Affirmative action and capacity-building for women in politics were recommended.

In Ethiopia, Tesfaye *et al.* (2023)<sup>[27]</sup> explored gender-sensitive agricultural programs in the Oromia and Amhara regions. While the initiatives improved women's access to resources, barriers like cultural norms and a lack of female extension workers persisted. Recommendations included integrating gender perspectives into agricultural curricula and increasing investments in women-focused development programs. In South Africa, Nkosi and Mthembu (2023)<sup>[22]</sup> studied gender-sensitive policies in healthcare, finding improvements in maternal and reproductive health services, especially where gender mainstreaming policies were actively implemented. However, issues like staff shortages, inadequate funding, and rural healthcare infrastructure hindered full policy implementation. They called for investments in infrastructure and healthcare personnel, particularly in underserved rural areas. Adebayo and Ojo (2023) explored gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's education sector, particularly in the northern regions, where cultural norms such as early marriages hinder girls' access to education. While some progress was made, the study recommended stronger community engagement and a legal framework to enforce gender equality in education.

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inadequate healthcare facilities and contraceptive access. The study called for increased investment in rural healthcare infrastructure and gender awareness programs. Ngoma and Banda (2023)<sup>[20]</sup> investigated Zambia's agricultural sector, noting improvements in women's access to training and credit. Mwansa and Musonda (2022)<sup>[17]</sup> explored barriers to gender mainstreaming in Zambia's public administration, noting challenges like limited political will, insufficient funding, and resistance to change at the grassroots level. They emphasized the need for stronger leadership and community engagement.

Ng'andu and Phiri (2021)<sup>[21]</sup> studied community engagement in rural Zambia, highlighting the role of grassroots advocacy in addressing harmful practices like early marriages. They recommended scaling up awareness campaigns and training traditional leaders to improve policy communication. Chileshe and Banda (2022)<sup>[10]</sup> analyzed gender mainstreaming in Zambia's media sector, finding improvements in women's representation but challenges in achieving leadership equity and combating gender stereotypes in media content. They called for regulatory interventions and training to foster gender awareness among media professionals.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study uses a descriptive case study design to investigate the integration, effectiveness, and influencing factors of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. This design allows for an in-depth examination of the policy in its real-world context, providing insights into its practical applications and outcomes (Yin, 2018).

#### 3.2 Target Population

The target population includes employees from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in Solwezi District, encompassing senior managers, middle managers, operational staff, and gender focal persons..

#### 3.3 Sampling Design

Purposive sampling is used to select participants with specific roles or experience related to the Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

#### 3.4 Sample Size

A total of 40 participants will be selected to ensure diverse representation across organizational levels, while remaining feasible within the study's resource constraints.

#### 3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data will be collected through structured questionnaires containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions will gather quantitative data on policy integration and effectiveness, while open-ended questions will explore challenges and influencing factors.

#### 3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis will include both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, via STATA to summarize closed-ended responses. Qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to identify and interpret patterns in open-ended responses related to policy effectiveness.

#### 3.7 Triangulation

Triangulation will be used to compare data from questionnaires with organizational documents such as reports and policy manuals.

#### 4. Findings/Results

##### 4.1 Presentations of research Findings

**Table 1:** Gender and education level diversity among the participants

| What is your gender? | What is your highest level of education? |         |           |          | Total |
|----------------------|--|---------|-----------|----------|-------|
|                      | Postgra..                                | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |       |
| Female               | 5  | 0       | 1         | 10       | 16    |
| Male                 | 3  | 1       | 4         | 6        | 14    |
| Total                | 8  | 1       | 5         | 16       | 30    |

The study shows a gender and education level diversity among the 30 participants. Females make up 53.33% (16 respondents), slightly outnumbering males at 46.67% (14 respondents). The majority have tertiary education (53.33%), with 10 females and 6 males. Postgraduate qualifications follow at 26.67% (8 respondents), and secondary education is held by 16.67% (5 respondents), mostly males. Primary education is the least common, represented by one male (3.33%).

**Table 2:** Respondents' positions within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services

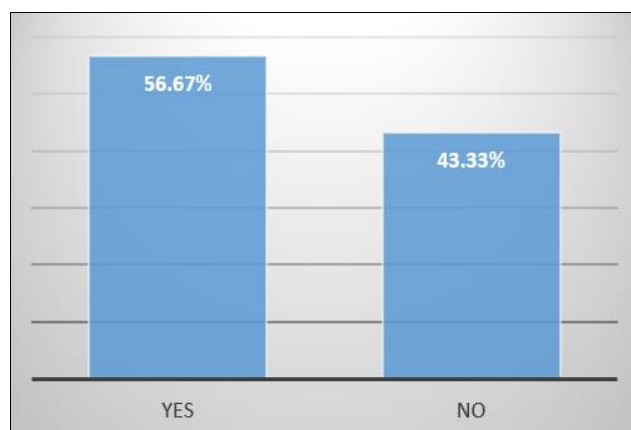
| Position in the Ministry      | Freq. | Percentage | Cum.   |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------|--------|
| Administrative assistant      | 3     | 10.00%     | 10.00  |
| Cleaner                       | 1     | 3.33%      | 13.33  |
| Community development officer | 3     | 10.00%     | 23.33  |
| Data clerk                    | 1     | 3.33%      | 26.67  |
| Driver                        | 1     | 3.33%      | 30.00  |
| Field coordinator             | 2     | 6.67%      | 36.67  |
| Finance officer               | 1     | 3.33%      | 40.00  |
| Gender officer                | 6     | 20.00%     | 60.00  |
| HR officer                    | 3     | 10.00%     | 70.00  |
| Planning specialist           | 3     | 10.00%     | 80.00  |
| Policy analyst                | 1     | 3.33%      | 83.33  |
| Program manager               | 1     | 3.33%      | 86.67  |
| Project manager               | 2     | 6.67%      | 93.33  |
| Training coordinator          | 2     | 6.67%      | 100.00 |
| Total                         | 30    | 100        |        |

**Table 3:** Use of tools and frameworks to ensure gender considerations in project planning within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services

| What tools or framework are used to ensure gender consideration in project planning within the Ministry | Freq. | Percentage (%) | Cum.   |
|---|-------|----------------|--------|
| Baseline surveys  | 2     | 6.67           | 6.67   |
| Basic check lists   | 3     | 10             | 16.67  |
| Checklists  | 2     | 6.67           | 23.33  |
| Framework for projection  | 6     | 20.00          | 43.33  |
| Gender analysis report  | 1     | 3.33           | 46.67  |
| Gender audit tools  | 1     | 3.33           | 50.00  |
| Gender impact assessment  | 2     | 6.67           | 56.67  |
| Gender-dis-aggregated data  | 2     | 6.67           | 63.33  |
| None  | 7     | 23.33          | 86.67  |
| Stakeholder consulting  | 1     | 3.33           | 90.00  |
| Training resources  | 3     | 10.00          | 100.00 |
| Total   | 30    | 100.00         |        |

The respondents hold diverse positions within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services. The most common role is "Gender Officer," with 6 respondents (20%). Other notable positions include "Administrative Assistant," "Community Development Officer," "HR Officer," and "Planning Specialist," each with 3 respondents (10%). Roles like "Field Coordinator," "Project Manager," and "Training Coordinator" each have 2 respondents (6.67%), while other positions such as "Cleaner," "Data Clerk," and "Finance Assistant" are represented by 1 respondent each (3.33%).

##### The extent to which the Gender Mainstreaming Policy has been integrated into the operational activities and decision-making processes



**Fig 1:** Designated focal point for gender mainstreaming activities

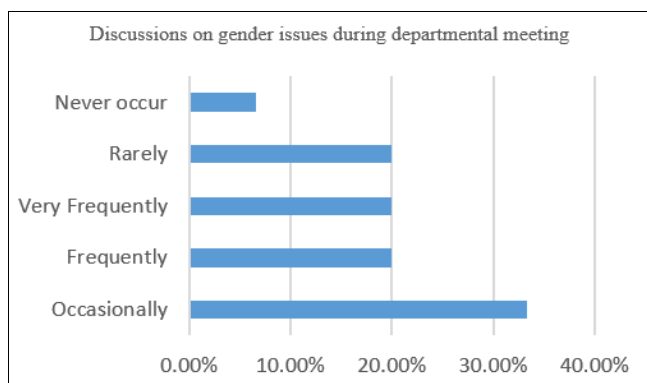
The findings show that 56.67% of respondents reported having a designated gender mainstreaming focal point in their department, while 43.33% did not. This indicates that while many departments have assigned roles for gender mainstreaming, a significant portion lacks a dedicated focal point, which could hinder the effective implementation and monitoring of gender equality initiatives.

The findings reveal varied use of tools for incorporating gender considerations in project planning. Common tools include "Frameworks for project design" (20%) and "None" (23.33%), indicating some departments lack specific frameworks. Other tools, such as "Basic checklists" and "Training resources" (10% each), along with "Baseline surveys" and "Gender impact assessments" (6.67% each), were less frequently reported. Rarely mentioned tools include "Gender Analysis Reports" and "Stakeholder Consultations" (3.33% each).

**Table 4:** Use of tools or frameworks to ensure gender considerations in project planning within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services

| Tools or frameworks to ensure gender considerations in project planning within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Service | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------|
| Baseline surveys  | 6.67           |
| Basic check lists   | 10             |
| Checklists  | 6.67           |
| Framework for projection  | 20.00          |
| Gender analysis report  | 3.33           |
| Gender audit tools  | 3.33           |
| Gender impact assessment  | 6.67           |
| Gender-dis-aggregated data  | 6.67           |
| None  | 23.33          |
| Stakeholder consulting  | 3.33           |
| Training resources  | 10.00          |

The findings reveal inconsistent use of tools and frameworks for integrating gender considerations in project planning and decision-making. While "Frameworks for project design" are frequently used, with 20% of respondents indicating regular use, tools like "Gender-disaggregated data" (6.67%) and "Gender Audit Tools" (3.33%) are less consistently applied. Other tools, such as "Basic checklists" and "Training resources," are used sporadically, and 23.33% of respondents reported no use of tools, with most citing "Rarely" (16.67%) or "Never" (6.67%). This uneven adoption underscores the need for standardized practices, capacity building, and mandatory integration of gender-sensitive tools to strengthen the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

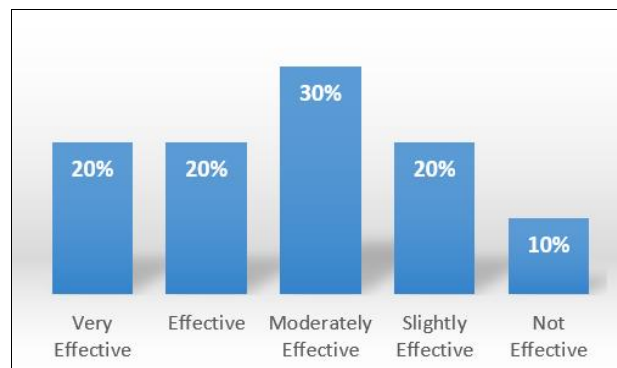


**Fig 2:** Discussions on gender issues during departmental meeting

The findings show that while gender issues are commonly discussed in departmental meetings, integration is inconsistent. Gender discussions occur "Occasionally" for

33.33% of respondents, "Frequently" for 20%, and "Very Frequently" for another 20%. However, 20% reported these discussions happen "Rarely," and 6.67% stated they never occur.

**The effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy on promoting gender equality.**



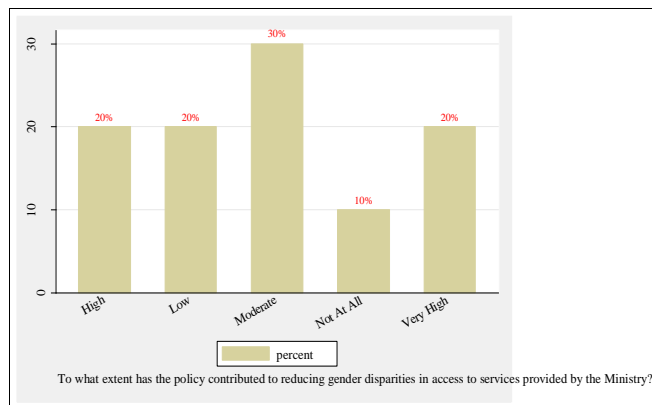
**Fig 3:** Assessment of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy's effectiveness in improving gender balance in leadership roles within the Ministry

The findings suggest a mixed perception of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy's effectiveness in promoting gender balance in leadership. While 20% rated it "Very Effective" and another 20% as "Effective," the majority (30%) viewed it as "Moderately Effective," indicating partial success. However, 20% found it "Slightly Effective," and 10% rated it "Not Effective," highlighting ongoing challenges.

**Table 5:** Perspectives on the changes observed in the representation of women in key decision-making positions

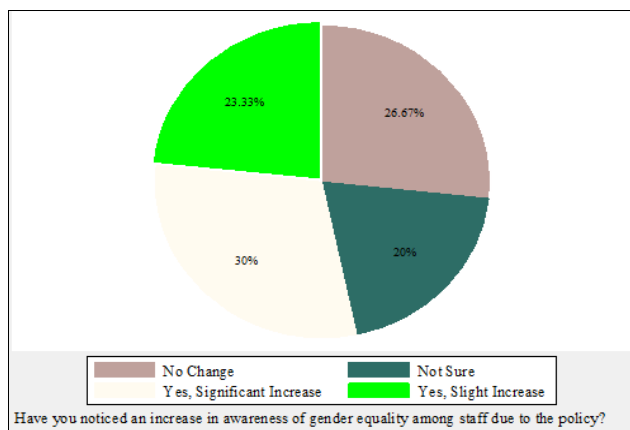
| What changes have you observed in the representation of women in key decision-making positions | Freq | Percentage (%) |
|--|------|----------------|
| Increase in female managers  | 1    | 3.33           |
| Increase in female leadership  | 5    | 16.67          |
| Marginal improvement   | 3    | 10.00          |
| Minimal changes  | 2    | 6.67           |
| Minimal impact   | 5    | 16.67          |
| More women in decision making committee  | 2    | 6.67           |
| No observable change   | 3    | 10.00          |
| Noticed significant increase   | 1    | 3.33           |
| Parity in leadership roles   | 2    | 6.67           |
| Significant changes  | 3    | 10.0           |
| Some improvement   | 3    | 10.00          |
| Total  | 30   | 100.00         |

The findings highlight mixed views on progress in women's representation in decision-making roles. Some respondents noted advancements, with 16.67% observing "Increased female leadership," 10% reporting "Significant changes," and 6.67% acknowledging "Parity in leadership roles." However, others reported limited progress, with 16.67% citing "Minimal impact," 10% seeing "No observable changes," and 6.67% noting "Minimal changes." These results indicate that while improvements have been made, further efforts are needed to address structural barriers and promote gender equity consistently.



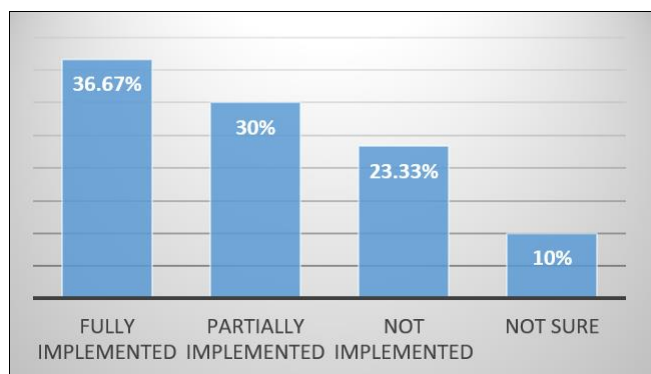
**Fig 4:** Extent to which the Gender Mainstreaming Policy has contributed to reducing gender disparities

The findings indicate mixed perceptions of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy's effectiveness in reducing gender disparities in access to opportunities. While 30% rated its contribution as "Moderate," 20% as "High," and another 20% as "Very High," showing progress, 20% rated it as "Low," and 10% reported "Not At All."



**Fig 5:** Staff awareness of gender equality as a result of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The findings show mixed outcomes regarding staff awareness of gender equality under the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. While 30% reported a "Significant Increase" and 23.33% noted a "Slight Increase," 26.67% observed "No Change," and 20% were "Not Sure" about its impact.



**Fig 6:** Workplace policies such as equal pay and anti-harassment measures

The implementation of workplace policies like equal pay and anti-harassment measures shows progress but remains inconsistent. While 36.67% of respondents reported these policies as "Fully Implemented" and 30% as "Partially Implemented," 23.33% noted they are "Not Implemented," and 10% were "Not Sure."

**Table 6:** Recommendations for steps the Ministry could take to further promote gender equality and enhance the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy

| Additional steps Ministry could take to further promote gender equality and enhance the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy | Freq | Percentage (%) |
|--|------|----------------|
| Awareness campaigns  | 4    | 13.33          |
| Better funding   | 2    | 6.67           |
| Conduct awareness Program  | 2    | 6.67           |
| Develop more gender tools  | 1    | 3.33           |
| Enhance leadership roles for women   | 1    | 3.33           |
| Enhancing training program   | 1    | 3.33           |
| Extensive training   | 2    | 6.67           |
| Increase funding   | 3    | 3.33           |
| Knowledge sharing program  | 4    | 13.33          |
| Mentorship opportunities   | 3    | 10.00          |
| Policy audits  | 2    | 6.67           |
| Policy updates   | 3    | 10.00          |
| Provide skills training  | 2    | 6.67           |
| Total  |      | 100            |

Respondents recommended steps to improve gender equality and the Gender Mainstreaming Policy, including Awareness Campaigns and Knowledge-sharing Programs (13.33% each), highlighting education's role in fostering gender equality. Mentorship Opportunities and Policy Updates (10% each) were also suggested to support women and address evolving needs. Other suggestions included Enhanced Training Programs, Better and Increased Funding (6.67% each), Policy Audits, and developing additional gender tools (3.33%).

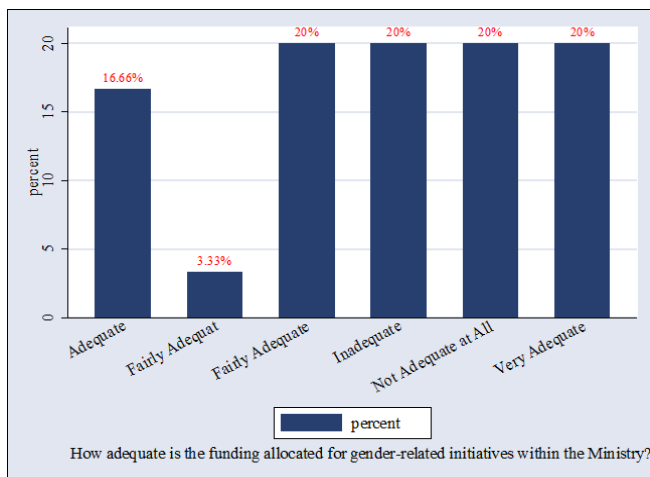
**The key factors influencing the successful implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy**

**Table 7:** Challenges that hinder the effective implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy in the department

| Challenges faced in implementing the gender mainstreaming policy | Freq | Percentage (%) |
|--|------|----------------|
| Cultural barriers  | 6    | 23.33          |
| Inadequate resources   | 1    | 3.33           |
| Inadequate tools   | 4    | 13.33          |
| Inconsistent monitoring  | 1    | 3.33           |
| Lack of awareness  | 4    | 13.33          |
| Lack of skilled staff  | 1    | 3.33           |
| Limited funding  | 5    | 20             |
| Limited stakeholder engagement                                   | 1    | 3.33           |
| Resistance from leadership                                       | 1    | 3.33           |
| Resistance to change   | 2    | 6.67           |
| Staff awareness  | 1    | 3.33           |
| Weak policy enforcement  | 3    | 10.00          |

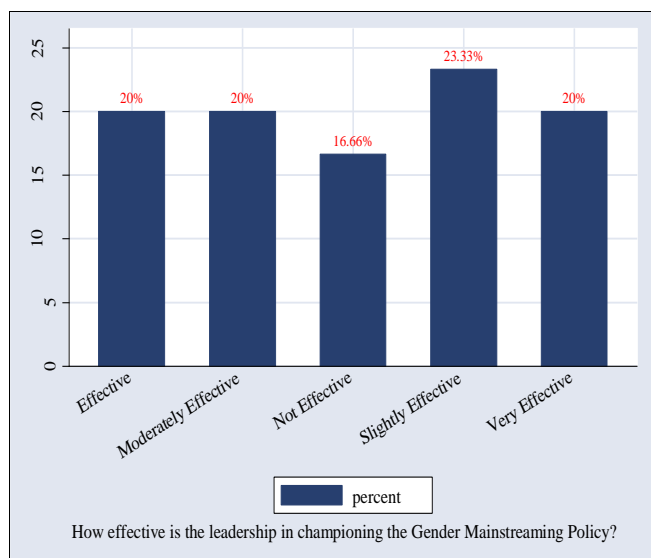
The findings highlight key challenges to implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Policy, with Cultural Barriers (16.67%) being the most cited, reflecting societal resistance to gender equality. Limited Funding, Inadequate Training,

and Lack of Awareness (each 13.33%) also emerged as significant obstacles, emphasizing the need for education and financial support. Additional challenges include Weak Policy Enforcement (10%), Resistance to Change (6.67%), and Leadership Resistance (3.33%). Less common issues like Inadequate Resources, Tools, and Staff Resistance (3.33% each) further complicate implementation.



**Fig 7:** Adequacy of funding allocated for gender-related initiatives within the Ministry indicate diverse perspectives among respondents

The findings reveal mixed perceptions regarding the adequacy of funding for gender initiatives. While 40% view funding as either Inadequate (20%) or Not Adequate at All (20%), another 36.67% find it Adequate (16.67%) or Very Adequate (20%), highlighting disparities in resource allocation. A smaller proportion (3.33%) described funding as Fairly Adequate.



**Fig 8:** Effectiveness of leadership in championing the Gender Mainstreaming Policy

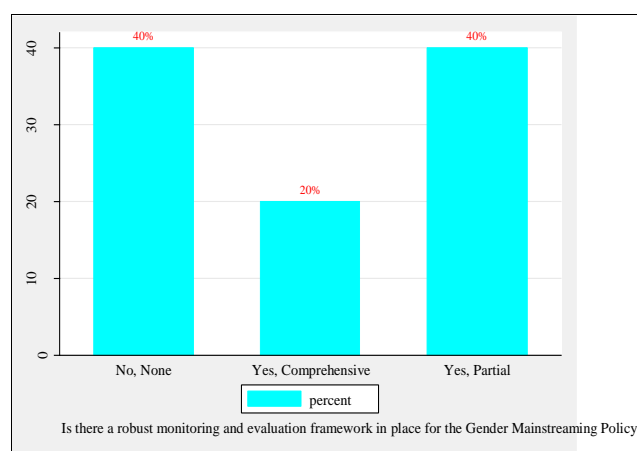
The findings show varied perceptions of leadership effectiveness in supporting the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. While 40% of respondents rate leadership as Effective (20%) or Very Effective (20%), 43.33% view it as Slightly Effective (23.33%) or Moderately Effective (20%). Additionally, 16.66% consider leadership Not Effective, indicating some gaps in advocacy and policy

implementation.

**Table 8:** Staff members' skill levels for implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Policy

| Staff members' skill levels for implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Policy | Freq | Percentage (%) | Cum    |
|--|------|----------------|--------|
| Moderately skilled   | 6    | 20             | 20.00  |
| Not skilled  | 6    | 20             | 40.00  |
| Skilled  | 6    | 20             | 60.00  |
| Slightly   | 6    | 20             | 80.00  |
| Very skilled   | 6    | 20             | 100.00 |
| Total  | 30   | 100            |        |

The findings reveal a diverse range of perceptions regarding staff skill levels for implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Policy, with 20% of respondents rating staff as Very Skilled, Skilled, Moderately Skilled, Slightly Skilled, and Not Skilled.



**Fig 9:** Monitoring and evaluation framework for the Gender Mainstreaming Policy

The findings reveal a significant gap in the monitoring and evaluation framework for the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. 40% of respondents reported no framework, while another 40% indicated a partial framework. Only 20% stated that a comprehensive framework exists. This highlights the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, incorporating clear indicators, regular assessments, and feedback mechanisms for better policy implementation.

**Table 9:** Capacity-building measures to support gender mainstreaming, with a strong emphasis on training

| Capacity-building measures to support gender mainstreaming | Freq | Percentage (%) |
|--|------|----------------|
| Comprehensive training programs                            | 6    | 20             |
| Gender-sensitive programs                                  | 5    | 16.67          |
| Mentorship programs  | 1    | 3.33           |
| None   | 1    | 3.33           |
| On-the-job training  | 6    | 20             |
| Targeted mentorship program                                | 5    | 16.67          |
| Workshops and seminars                                     | 6    | 20             |

The Ministry has implemented various capacity-building measures to support gender mainstreaming, with a focus on training, which is highlighted by 20% of respondents. Gender-sensitive guidelines and targeted mentorship programs are used by 16.67%, but mentorship could be further expanded. Workshops and seminars are also reported



by 16.67%. However, 3.33% of respondents indicated no capacity-building measures were implemented. Overall, while progress has been made, there is a need to enhance mentorship opportunities and ensure all staff have access to the necessary training and resources for effective gender mainstreaming.

#### 4.2 Discussion

The findings highlight the diverse backgrounds of respondents, providing a comprehensive foundation for evaluating the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. The participants represent a wide age range (27 to 50 years), with a balanced mix of mid-career and seasoned professionals. Gender representation is nearly equal, with females slightly outnumbering males (53.33% to 46.67%), ensuring perspectives from both genders are well-represented. Educational attainment is high, with 80% holding tertiary or postgraduate qualifications, enhancing the depth of their insights.

Marital status diversity, with 36.67% married and significant representation from single (23.33%), divorced (20%), and widowed (20%) individuals, adds to the richness of perspectives. The respondents' roles within the Ministry range from gender-focused positions like Gender Officers (20%) to administrative and technical roles such as HR Officers and Planning Specialists, reflecting broad organizational experiences. Most respondents have 4–7 years of experience (46.66%), striking a balance between institutional knowledge and fresh viewpoints.

This diversity underscores key areas for action, such as leveraging the expertise of Gender Officers, addressing varied knowledge gaps through tailored capacity-building, and ensuring the policy's impact across hierarchical levels. The respondents' varied roles, years of experience, and balanced representation provide nuanced insights into the policy's effectiveness, highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement.

#### **Extent to which the Gender Mainstreaming Policy has been integrated into the operational activities and decision-making processes**

The findings reveal a moderate level of integration of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, with clear indications of both progress and areas requiring attention. While 33.33% of respondents rated policy incorporation as "Moderate" or higher, gaps remain, as evidenced by 16.67% rating it as "Low" and 6.67% as "Not At All." Departments with stronger integration typically benefit from regular gender-sensitive training programs, highlighting the importance of capacity-building in embedding gender equality into operational activities. The absence of consistent efforts across all departments suggests the need for a more uniform approach to policy implementation.

Institutional capacity is another area of concern, with 43.33% of departments lacking dedicated gender focal points. This shortfall undermines accountability and consistency, limiting the policy's overall impact. Additionally, the use of gender-sensitive tools and frameworks, such as "Frameworks for project design" and "Gender-disaggregated data," varies widely. While some departments have adopted these tools consistently, 23.33% reported no use, highlighting significant disparities. Standardized training and mandatory adoption of such tools

could help address these inconsistencies and ensure gender considerations are integrated into decision-making processes uniformly.

The discussion of gender issues during departmental meetings also shows room for improvement. While 33.33% of respondents noted that these discussions occur "Occasionally," only 20% reported them happening "Very Frequently," and 6.67% indicated they are never discussed. This highlights an uneven prioritization of gender concerns. Embedding gender topics into regular meeting agendas and fostering a culture of accountability could improve the consistency of these discussions. Overall, strengthening capacity-building efforts, standardizing practices, and increasing accountability mechanisms are essential to achieving comprehensive integration of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

#### **The effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy on promoting gender equality**

The findings highlight a mixed level of effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy (GMP) in promoting gender equality within the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services. While approximately 40% of respondents rated the policy as "Very Effective" or "Effective" in improving gender balance in leadership roles, 30% considered it "Moderately Effective," and another 30% expressed skepticism about its impact. This uneven progress suggests the need for focused interventions, such as leadership development programs and mentorship initiatives, to dismantle structural barriers and promote equitable representation. Similarly, the representation of women in decision-making positions has shown limited improvement, with some respondents noting progress, while many highlighted minimal or no impact. These findings point to the importance of sustained reforms and capacity-building efforts to foster a more inclusive leadership environment.

The policy's contribution to reducing gender disparities also exhibits variability. While 70% of respondents recognized moderate to very high progress, 30% reported minimal or no impact, indicating gaps in implementation. Staff awareness of gender equality has improved for some, with 30% reporting a "Significant Increase," but a notable proportion (26.67%) observed "No Change," and 20% were unsure of the policy's influence. These outcomes underscore the need for consistent awareness campaigns and training programs to ensure broad engagement. Additionally, workplace policies like equal pay and anti-harassment measures reveal significant inconsistencies in implementation. Although 36.67% of respondents affirmed full enforcement, 30% reported partial implementation, and 23.33% noted no implementation, highlighting the need for better enforcement and communication.

To enhance the GMP's effectiveness, respondents recommended a range of measures, including awareness campaigns, knowledge-sharing programs, mentorship opportunities, and policy updates. Enhanced training programs and improved funding emerged as critical to addressing existing challenges, while policy audits and the development of additional gender tools were suggested to strengthen accountability and institutional frameworks. These recommendations emphasize the importance of a multifaceted approach that combines education, policy reform, and resource mobilization to drive meaningful and

sustainable progress toward gender equality.

### **The key factors influencing the successful implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy**

The successful implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy (GMP) within the Ministry is influenced by a combination of cultural, financial, and institutional factors. Cultural barriers, cited by 16.67% of respondents, remain a significant challenge, reflecting entrenched societal norms that resist gender equality. Limited funding, inadequate training, and lack of awareness—each reported by 13.33% of respondents further hinder effective policy execution. These challenges emphasize the need for capacity-building initiatives and education programs to enhance staff competencies and awareness. Structural and attitudinal issues, including weak policy enforcement (10%), resistance to change (6.67%), and resistance from leadership (3.33%), underline the importance of addressing organizational inertia and fostering a culture of accountability to advance gender mainstreaming efforts.

Funding adequacy and leadership effectiveness emerged as critical factors in GMP implementation. While 20% of respondents rated funding as "Very Adequate" or "Adequate," 40% deemed it "Inadequate" or "Not Adequate at All," reflecting uneven financial support across departments. Addressing these disparities through strategic resource allocation is essential for equitable and effective implementation. Leadership effectiveness was similarly variable, with 40% of respondents rating leadership as "Effective" or "Very Effective," while 23.33% considered it "Slightly Effective" and 16.66% rated it as "Not Effective." These findings suggest a need for leadership development programs and accountability mechanisms to strengthen advocacy for gender equality and ensure consistent policy enforcement.

Gaps in staff skills and monitoring systems also hinder the policy's success. Respondents evenly distributed ratings of staff skill levels across all categories, highlighting a need for regular assessments and targeted training to address knowledge gaps and promote consistency. Furthermore, 40% of respondents reported the absence of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, while another 40% noted a partial system. This lack of robust tracking mechanisms limits the Ministry's ability to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. Expanding capacity-building initiatives, such as training programs, mentorship opportunities, and the adoption of gender-sensitive tools, can enhance policy implementation. By addressing these challenges through resource investment, leadership development, and institutional reforms, the Ministry can achieve more consistent and impactful integration of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The evaluation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy (GMP) in the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in Solwezi District reveals notable progress alongside significant challenges. The integration of the GMP into operational activities and decision-making processes is evident, but gaps remain in areas such as the assignment of focal points, consistent use of gender-sensitive tools, and standardized guidelines. Only 56.67% of departments have dedicated focal points, and the

inconsistent adoption of gender tools reflects an uneven implementation. Targeted measures, including structured training programs and the mandatory adoption of gender frameworks, are essential to bridge these gaps and ensure uniform policy execution across all departments.

The GMP has moderately contributed to promoting gender equality, especially in leadership representation and workplace policies. However, its impact is uneven, with many respondents rating the policy's effectiveness as moderate or low. Persistent challenges such as cultural barriers, inadequate funding, insufficient training, and weak enforcement mechanisms undermine the policy's success. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including increased financial investment, comprehensive capacity-building initiatives, and robust enforcement systems. Enhanced leadership development, mentorship opportunities, and awareness campaigns are critical to overcoming structural barriers and fostering equitable representation in decision-making roles. Strengthening leadership accountability and advocacy for gender mainstreaming will be vital for sustained progress.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

1. **Strengthen Policy Integration**  
Assign gender focal points to all departments and implement standardized tools for consistent gender-sensitive planning.
2. **Enhance Leadership and Accountability**  
Provide leadership development training and establish mechanisms to hold leaders accountable for promoting and implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives.
3. **Increase Funding for Gender Initiatives**  
Allocate sufficient financial resources to support comprehensive gender-related programs and address funding gaps.
4. **Expand Training and Mentorship Programs**  
Conduct regular training sessions to enhance staff skills and introduce mentorship programs to promote gender equity in leadership positions.
5. **Address Cultural Barriers**  
Implement awareness campaigns to challenge cultural norms and ensure consistent discussion of gender issues in departmental meetings.
6. **Standardize Monitoring and Evaluation**  
Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework with clear performance indicators and periodic reviews to track and improve policy outcomes.

### **5. Acknowledgement**

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