In human resources management, gender, gender parity and gender equality are relevant to:
- talent acquisition, deployment and retention
- performance management and engagement
- capacity development
- career development

A key human resources management goal is gender parity – 50% women and 50% men – in employees across all grades, functions and contract modalities. Another way of viewing this goal is as the absence of sex discrimination in the appointment and promotion of employees.

As part of the UN SWAP – United Nations System-Wide Action Plan for Implementation of the CEB United Nations System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – WFP is required to achieve the common goal of “equal representation of women for General Service staff and at P4 and above levels, including the senior most levels of representation in Field Offices, Committees, Advisory Bodies and Funds linked to the entity, irrespective of budgetary source”.

Within WFP, through the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020) there is a commitment to “equal representation of women and men employees at P4 level and above or the equivalent national employee levels – including senior levels of field offices, committees and funds – irrespective of funding source.” This commitment is reiterated in the corporate Gender Action Plan and complemented with the action of working “towards equal representation of women and men employees at P3 and NOC levels and below.”

Alongside recruitment processes, WFP’s ability to equally engage women and men is key. Ensuring that gender parity and diversity are fostered at all levels requires investment in the career development of all employees, so that the women and men who work for WFP have the knowledge and skills to mainstream gender and contribute to achieving gender equality outcomes.

There are four key reasons why WFP promotes gender equality in the workplace.

**Attracting & Retaining ‘Talent’**: Being an employer that is committed to gender equality – and to diversity more generally – is key to attracting and retaining an engaged workforce; a pool of competent and committed women and men who collectively contribute to WFP delivering on its mandate. Supporting use of flexible working arrangements assists women and men in balancing work and personal
responsibilities, such as care of family members; translating effective, efficient and dedicated participation of women and men in the workforce.

**Performance:** Gender parity in staffing, including gender diversity in work teams, is linked to strong organisational performance and productivity. The equitable presence of women and men, particularly in decision-making positions, is critical to ensuring that a range of views, opinions and analysis are brought to the many food security and nutrition issues that WFP addresses. Diverse perspectives that represent the different needs and interests of the women and men, girls and boys, who we serve are needed for WFP to deliver on its commitment to achieve zero hunger. Also, innovative organisations are those with gender equitable workforces, including in senior management teams.

**Reality, Reputation and Role-Modelling:** Gender equality is a fundamental principle and commitment of United Nations members and system entities. This is evident, for example, in (a) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (b) the Economic and Social Council resolution on gender mainstreaming in the UN (E/RES/2016/2), and (c) UN-SWAP. Gender parity is linked to respect for diversity, which is another core United Nations value. Advancing gender equality in our organization and in the work we do is therefore (i) a reality in the world in which we operate, and (ii) fundamental to our reputation as a credible and competent humanitarian and development actor, which can partner strategically, attract resources and achieve results. Also, it would be hypocritical for WFP to advocate for gender equality in our programmes and operations – for our partners and ‘the people we serve’ – but fail to genuinely commit to gender equality in our workforce and workplaces.

**Cost-Effective:** Organisations that actively advance gender equality in their workforces retain staff because both women and men choose to stay with employers who are seen, and experienced, as being fair.

**WHEN & WHERE**

Gender in human resources is relevant to every WFP office and operation.

Some contexts are more challenging than others in terms of achieving gender parity in staffing; such as those where sex discrimination and rigid gender roles are embedded in national policies, legislation and socio-cultural norms and practices. While recognising such challenges, all WFP Offices should actively implement measures that support progress towards gender parity in staffing at all levels.

**WHO**

The positions within WFP with direct responsibilities for (a) advancing gender parity, (b) strengthening gender capacities and (c) investing in the professional development of employees include:

- Senior managers
- Line managers
- Staffing coordinators
- HR employees
- Recruitment panel members
For guidance and assistance on general HR matters, please go to the ‘Staff and Human Resources’ topic page on the WFP intranet.

1. Recruitment

1. Awareness, Knowledge & Skills

Promote awareness of WFP’s goal of achieving gender parity in staffing at all levels. For example, regularly include reminders about the gender parity goal, and progress towards achieving the goal, in internal communications, such as group emails and meetings.

Ensure that all employees involved in recruitment processes have a basic understanding of:
(a) gender and gender equality
(b) WFP’s Gender Policy (2015-2020)
(c) the relevance of gender to WFP’s mandate.

- Provide employees with copies of the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020), the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and the Corporate Results Framework.
- Share the link to the Gender Channel on the WFP Learning Portal
- Refer employees to the WFP Gender Toolkit
- Refer to unconscious bias materials

2. Vacancy Announcements, Terms of Reference & Job Descriptions

In vacancy announcements, job descriptions and terms of reference:
- Use gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory language.
- Include sentences like the following:
  Qualified women and men, and qualified people from developing countries, are encouraged to apply. WFP is committed to an inclusive working environment which values diversity and has zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind.
- Include gender considerations in the background and purpose sections.
- Include requirements for gender knowledge, skills and experience in the qualifications section.
- State whether the job needs to be performed full-time and based in the office, or if there is flexibility in workplace and working hours.

Examples of Gender-Related Responsibilities
- Collecting and reporting sex and age-disaggregated data
- Gender analysis
- Consulting with sector gender experts and organisations
- Holding discussions on the gender dimensions of technical work
- Integrating gender into objectives, outcomes, indicators, activities, strategies and budgets
- Making recommendations and practical suggestions for advancing gender equality

(☞ Generic Gender Specialist ToR)
3. Outreach

Ensure that job vacancy announcements are widely-circulated.

Identify and use the communication platforms that are preferred by women and by men (also accommodating for other factors, such as age, disability and language).

Where there is a need to increase the number of women employees, identify and share vacancy announcements with women’s rights organisations, women’s professional associations, and institutions and channels targeting women; such as the Association of Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), BRIDGE and the East African Young Women’s Leadership Initiative (EAYWL).

Use social media strategically. WFP posts vacancy announcements on, for example, LinkedIn; Facebook; Bayt; ReliefWeb and Devex.

4. Long & Shortlisting

Gender-balance in candidate longlists and shortlists is a key step in achieving gender parity among employees. Where qualified women are not identified for short-listing, the Hiring Unit should review the applications to ensure that no qualified women have been overlooked. If the review of applications does not identify qualified women, the Hiring Unit may consider re-advertising the post and taking targeted actions to bring the post to the attention of qualified women. Women should constitute 30 percent of candidate longlists and shortlists.

5. Assessing & Interviewing

Include at least one woman and one man in all recruitment and interview panels. If there are more than three members on a recruitment or interview panel, aim for gender balance.

Ensure that all members of the interview panel have a basic understanding of gender; of the relevance of gender equality to WFP’s work, and of the responsibility of all employees to mainstream gender in their work. Run regular gender-sensitisation sessions so that employees who participate in recruitment interviews have the opportunity to acquire the necessary gender-awareness. Ensure that at least one member of the interview panel has gender expertise.

Include assessment of gender awareness and competencies in evaluation exercises and job interviews; without overshadowing the desired core knowledge, skills and experiences. Consider competencies related to:

- understanding of general gender concepts
- gender analysis
- advocacy
- team-based leadership styles that foster trust and confidence among employees and partners
- communication (which is important for sharing information and ideas, as well as engaging stakeholders)
- conflict resolution

Sample Interview Questions:

- Thinking of your previous positions, has gender equality been part of your work? Please describe how.
- Thinking of a previous position, please describe how you integrated gender into your work? What where the priorities? And why?
- Could you speak about an occasion when you have effectively integrated gender into your work; highlighting the contribution to advancing gender equality.
- Please provide an example of your experience working on gender, outlining your tasks, the results you achieved, the difficulties you encountered and the lessons learned.
Tips for Gender-Sensitive Interviewing:

- Ask all candidates the same questions.
- Do not ask discriminatory questions – questions about a candidate’s family status, age, sex, gender, sexuality, religious/spiritual belief, dis/ability etc.
- Ask competency-based questions, such as:
  - Please tell us about a situation when you went above and beyond your manager’s expectations.
  - Please provide an example of a time when you used your problem-solving abilities to resolve an issue.
  - Tell us about a time when a number of demands were being made of you and how you handled that situation.
- Remember that knowledge and skills can be acquired outside of the workplace and during career breaks; including in caring roles.

6. Selection & Recommendation

When evaluating qualified women candidates for higher level professional positions, and in addition to attending to both competence and merit, give consideration to the nature, and not purely duration, of relevant experience.

Where gender parity in Professional and General Service posts has yet to be achieved, and where candidates are equally qualified and deemed to be equally competent, give preference to the under-represented sex.

The Executive Director approves all appointments for positions at the P5 level and above. Recommended lists of candidates should include at least one woman. A clear justification must be provided if a recommended list of candidate does not include a woman.

For candidates who have been on parental leave or leave of a personal nature, give consideration to learning or professional development acquired during the leave period.

7. Monitoring

Monitor progress towards achieving gender parity in employees at all levels and across all functional areas.

Monitor your Human Resources dashboard up-to-date. ‘Our People statistics’ are also available for functional area (e.g. Finance) and for Headquarters’ Units.

Include recruitment targets in the annual PACE work plans for hiring managers.

2. Retention

Along with recruitment, retention and engagement of employees is a key means of realizing the gender parity goal.

Monitor staffing changes

Analyse Global Engagement Survey results: Review the results and level of engagement of women and men. Use the information to improve the workplace environment for all employees. Make sure that the actions taken address the main issues identified by both women and men. Pay particular attention to the areas where there are significant gaps.

Conduct exit interviews: Conduct exit interviews to identify the reasons why women and men employees separate from WFP (apart from completion of contracts). Make sure to address both substantive work and
work place environment issues. Use the information gathered from exit interviews – and other sources, such as the Global Staff Survey – to improve the workplace environment for women and men.

**Given equal opportunities for career development:** Make career development opportunities available to women and men. Provide support mechanisms, feedback and advice, as well as access to career counselling, leadership training and mentoring, to both women and men.

**Emphasise the importance of diversity and inclusion in WFP:** Educate and remind employees about the importance of, and commitment to, diversity and inclusion in WFP.

**Check opportunities for spouse employment, reassignment, rotation and mobility:** Implement WFP’s ‘employment of spouses / recognised domestic partners’ and ‘reassignment, rotation and mobility’ provisions.

**Common Reasons Why Women Leave an Organisation**
(a) A hostile work place culture
(b) Harassment
(c) A sense of isolation – being the only woman, or one of a few women, in a team
(d) Excessive workloads, that demand long work days and weekend commitments, along with frequent travel
(e) Restrictive socio-cultural expectations and constraints that assign unpaid care and domestic work to women
(f) Lack of sponsors for professional development
(g) Emphasis on presence at workplace as opposed to achievement of results
(h) Absence of flexibility for work-life balance
(i) Discriminatory practices that disadvantage women

**3. Committees**

The functioning and set-up of committees also falls within the gender parity goal. It is important that women and men are represented on both standing and ad-hoc committees so that diverse views and voices are heard.

**Women’s Representation on Committees:** Nominate women for committees where they are under-represented. And nominate men for committees where they are under-represented.

**Ensure that a committee’s terms of reference include requirements for:**
- gender parity in membership
- rotation of positions (e.g. Chair, Secretary) between women and men
- transparency in processes, decisions and recommendations

**Check and encourage gender awareness among committee members.**
- Have all members completed an introductory course on gender?¹
- Do all members know about the information and tools available
- Do all members know who their Office’s Gender Results Network members are?

**Committee Decisions & Recommendations:**
Monitor committee decisions and recommendations to ensure equitable impacts for women and men. Alert the committee where differential and discriminatory decisions and recommendations; and seek amendments. Promote transparency by ensuring the committee publishes its results.

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¹ Introductory e-learning courses can be accessed on the Gender Channel of the WFP Learning Portal.
4. Performance Management & Career Development

1. Performance Management: Accountability for Gender Equality

Performance management is one means of ensuring that all employees have the information and support to assume their responsibilities for integrating gender into their work and contributing to achieving gender equality outcomes in food security and nutrition.

The annual PACEs of WFP Senior Managers should include at least one output or KPI related to gender equality. This is in line with the requirement, as listed in the corporate Gender Action Plan, that “accountabilities for GEWE [gender equality and women’s empowerment]” be included “in senior management performance evaluations”.

Also, as required under the Gender Policy (2015-2020), annual performance assessments of all employees should include review of gender equality competencies.

Example PACE Entries:
- Office has a current gender action plan
- Annual gender parity target developed and met
- e-Learning courses ‘I Know Gender’ (including Emergencies module) and ‘Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and SEA at WFP’ completed
- Systematic collection, analysis and use of sex and age-disaggregated data
- # or % of women and men participating in programme identification / design / implementation / monitoring
- All agreements with cooperating partners contain GEWE clauses addressing minimum standards, activities, performance indicators, monitoring, reporting or other applicable measure/s
- 15% of the programme budget is allocated to gender equality activities / outputs / outcomes
- # or % of publications that integrate GEWE
- # or % of women and men using flexible working arrangements (telecommuting, flexitime, part-time employment etc.)
- Orientation to gender equality in WFP included in the induction of new employees
- Systematic inclusion of gender analysis in all key policy, programme and reporting documents

To access WFP’s corporate performance management tool – PACE, Performance And Competency Enhancement – please login at http://pace.wfp.org/login

2. Career Development

Make career development opportunities available to women and men employees, and ensure that gender equality is promoted along career progression and advancement. Support the career development of women and men, including mentoring and encouraging transformative leadership.

Career development opportunities, such as trainings and workshops, should be made available to both women and men equitably. The timing and locations of learning opportunities should not conflict with the caring responsibilities of employees.

Guiding Questions
- Are training and career development opportunities made available to all employees, regardless of their sex?
- Do women and men have equal opportunities for formal and informal mentoring?
- Do women and men have equal opportunities to represent the organisation, attend conferences and other professional activities, and meet with appropriate visitors?
- Are transparent criteria and procedures used for determining participation in professional development opportunities, so that bias on the basis of sex is avoided?
5. Gender Capacity Development

1. Corporate Requirements

All employees are required to have:

- a basic understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment, including in relation to food security and nutrition
- completed a basic-level training course on gender equality and women's empowerment, preferably in relation to food security and nutrition, such as:
  - 'I Know Gender: an Introduction to Gender Equality for UN Staff' course
  - IASC ‘Different Needs – Equal Opportunities’ e-course (also available through DisasterReady)
  - FAO ‘Gender in Food and Nutrition Security’ course
  - UNHCR’s ‘Age, Gender and Diversity Approach’ e-course (available through DisasterReady)
  - Oxfam ‘Gender Justice: An Introduction’ e-course (available through DisasterReady)

All Offices / Units should have adequate technical capacities for gender-transformative programming.

2. Actions

Include orientation to gender equality in WFP in the induction of new and returning employees.

Identify gender learning needs and include measures to address specific competencies in performance assessments.

Complete, and refer colleagues, to the gender e-courses on the WFP Learning Portal (Gender Channel).

Regularly – such as every six months – hold a learning event to strengthen employees understanding of and ability to do, gender mainstreaming and discuss progress.

In a participatory manner, develop and implement a “learning by doing” gender capacity development plan for mid-level and senior staff.

Join and participate in the online Gender Community.

Participate – individually or as an office – in the monthly gender brown bag sessions – 12:30-13:30 Rome time, first Tuesday of every month, with webcasting and recording. Announcements are posted on the Gender Community.

Partner with a gender specialist or gender-specialised entity – such as UN Women, a gender studies department in an academic institution, a women’s civil society organization, a standby partner – to support gender-transformative programming.

Refer employees to the WFP Gender Toolkit.

Where resources allow, recruit a gender adviser.
6. WFP Learning Portal - Gender e-Courses

**Course: I Know Gender**

‘I know Gender’ offers basic introduction to gender and related frameworks in the UN system. The three core modules of the course are:
1) Gender concepts to get started
2) International frameworks for gender equality
3) Promoting gender equality throughout the UN System.

Access the course in:
[English](#) – [Spanish](#)

**Course: Gender Equality in Emergencies**

‘Gender Equality in Emergencies’ explores the importance of promoting gender in all emergency operations and responses.

[English](#)

**Course: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities**

Different Needs – Equal opportunities provides the basic steps a humanitarian worker must take to ensure gender equality in programming. It includes information on the core issues of gender and how it relates to aspects of humanitarian response.

[English](#)

**Course: Gender in Food & Nutrition Security**

The course provides guidance on how to design and implement agriculture policies and programmes that are gender-responsive, sustainable, contributing to gender equality and therefore able to improve food and nutrition security.

[English](#)