

RÉSEAU DES FEMMES LEADERS POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT
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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy

Internal hiring, pay equity, and inclusive organisational culture across RFLD's pan-African network — aligned to RFLD's feminist mandate and GESI obligations

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Table of Contents

1. Purpose, Mandate, and RFLD's DEI Commitment
 2. Scope and Key Definitions
 3. Foundational Principles — From Compliance to Transformation
 4. Protected Characteristics and Grounds of Protection
 5. Intersectional Analysis — Who We Are and Who We Serve
 6. Equity in Recruitment and Selection
 7. Pay Equity — Framework, Analysis, and Remediation
 8. Inclusive Onboarding and Retention
 9. Inclusive Leadership and Management
 10. Language Justice and Francophone Equity
 11. Disability Inclusion
 12. Pregnancy, Parental Status, and Caring Responsibilities
 13. Religious and Cultural Inclusion
 14. LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Safety
 15. Age and Intergenerational Equity
 16. Board and Governance Diversity
 17. DEI in Programme Design and Delivery
 18. Partner and Supplier DEI Expectations
 19. Measurement, Reporting, and Accountability
 20. DEI Action Plan 2026–2029
 21. Complaints, Enforcement, and Policy Review
- Annex A — DEI Data Collection and Monitoring Framework
- Annex B — Inclusive Recruitment Checklist
- Annex C — Pay Equity Analysis Methodology
- Annex D — Reasonable Adjustment Request Form
- Annex E — Annual DEI Progress Report Template

1. Purpose, Mandate, and RFLD's DEI Commitment

1.1 Purpose of This Policy

This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy ('the Policy') establishes RFLD's framework for building and sustaining an organisation that genuinely embodies its feminist mandate — not only in its programmes but in its own composition, culture, hiring practices, compensation, leadership, and daily ways of working. It sets binding standards, measurable commitments, and clear accountability mechanisms for diversity, equity, and inclusion across all four RFLD offices and all aspects of organisational life.

RFLD exists to advance the rights, power, and leadership of women and girls across Africa. An organisation that advocates for gender justice, challenges structural inequality, and supports women human rights defenders in some of the most difficult civic space environments on the continent must embody those values internally — not merely reference them in programme documents. An RFLD that is itself exclusionary, inequitable, or systematically inaccessible would be, at best, a contradiction of its stated mission, and at worst, a form of institutional hypocrisy that undermines the credibility and moral authority of its external advocacy.

This Policy is therefore not a compliance document. It is a mirror: holding RFLD to the same transformative standards it demands of the systems, structures, and institutions it seeks to change. It is adopted in recognition that DEI work within RFLD is genuinely difficult — that structural inequality does not stop at RFLD's office door — and that honest, self-critical, continuous improvement is more valuable than aspirational declarations without accountability.

1.2 RFLD's DEI Mandate — Sources of Obligation and Aspiration

RFLD's DEI commitments arise from multiple intersecting and mutually reinforcing sources:

Source	DEI Obligation / Aspiration
RFLD's Feminist Mandate	Feminism is not a programme theme — it is RFLD's theory of change, applied internally and externally. Feminist practice requires examining and dismantling power imbalances, including those within RFLD itself. An organisation that practises feminist advocacy while tolerating internal inequity is not a feminist organisation.
Accountability to 670 Member Organisations	RFLD's member network is diverse in language, geography, ethnicity, legal form, and constituency. An RFLD that does not reflect this diversity cannot genuinely represent or serve this network. Accountability to members includes ensuring RFLD's organisational culture and power dynamics are accessible, not alienating, to grassroots organisations.
Sida NAFASI Grant 2026–2029	Sida requires RFLD to demonstrate active GESI (Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion) practice as an organisation — not only in programming. RFLD's own hiring, pay equity, and inclusive culture are subject to Sida's GESI review.
GIZ/BMZ SEA-T Cohort Membership	The SEA-T cohort includes specific DEI obligations as conditions of continued cohort membership. RFLD's performance against these is reviewed annually.
National Employment Law	Employment non-discrimination law in Benin, Ghana, Senegal, and The Gambia sets minimum legal standards. This Policy exceeds those minimums in every case — because legal compliance is the floor, not the ceiling.
Pan-African Feminist Movement Accountability	RFLD is embedded in and accountable to a continental movement for feminist transformation. The movement actively evaluates whether organisations like RFLD practice what they advocate. Credibility in this movement requires demonstrated DEI commitment, not performative statements.
Governance Requirement	RFLD's institutional investors — donors, NGOs — require evidence of non-discriminatory practices and equitable governance as conditions of institutional recognition.

1.3 RFLD's Honest Diversity Self-Assessment — Starting Points

This Policy is grounded in an honest assessment of RFLD's current organisational diversity profile. Self-congratulation obscures the gaps that genuine DEI work must address. RFLD acknowledges the following about its current state:

- Staff composition: RFLD's staff is majority female, consistent with its feminist mandate. However, senior technical and leadership roles are disproportionately held by English-speaking staff with postgraduate qualifications from a limited set of institutions — a profile that reflects the structural biases of international civil society rather than the diversity of RFLD's operating contexts.
- Francophone representation: RFLD's programme reach is primarily francophone (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea), yet English operates as the dominant language in most senior functions and cross-office communications. This creates structural disadvantage for francophone colleagues that compounds with other inequities.
- Geographic representation: Programme delivery extends across 15+ countries, but staff from Sahel countries — where RFLD's most complex and highest-stakes programmes operate — are significantly underrepresented at all grade levels.
- Disability: RFLD does not yet have systematic data on the disability profile of its workforce. This is itself a gap — the invisibility of disability data reinforces the invisibility of disability experience. This Policy commits to building that data and actively reducing barriers.
- Age and generation: RFLD's networks encompass young women activists and defenders who are the primary beneficiaries of some of its most significant programming, yet RFLD's staff and governance structures skew toward older age profiles. Meaningful intergenerational representation in decision-making is an unresolved gap.
- LGBTQ+ inclusion: RFLD operates across multiple contexts with very different legal and social environments for LGBTQ+ individuals. Genuine LGBTQ+ inclusion within RFLD requires deliberate, context-sensitive work that this Policy initiates.

2. Scope and Key Definitions

2.1 Scope of Application

This Policy applies to: all RFLD employment decisions and workplace practices across all four offices; all Board composition and governance activities; all programme design and delivery decisions; all partner engagement and supplier relationships; and all external communications and advocacy activities in which RFLD represents itself. It applies to permanent, fixed-term, part-time, and probationary staff; Board members and committee members; consultants, volunteers, and interns; and RFLD's institutional conduct as a civil society actor.

2.2 Key Definitions

Term	Definition
Diversity	The range of human differences — in identity, background, experience, and perspective — present within RFLD's workforce and stakeholder communities. Diversity is descriptive. It answers: who is in the room?
Equity	The fair and just treatment of all individuals — acknowledging that achieving genuinely equal outcomes sometimes requires providing different levels of support or accommodation to people in different structural positions. Equity is distinct from equality: equality gives everyone the same thing; equity gives everyone what they need to thrive. Equity confronts the conditions that create unequal starting points.
Inclusion	The active, intentional creation of an environment in which all people feel genuinely welcomed, respected, valued, and able to contribute fully — regardless of their identity, background, or personal characteristics. Inclusion is experiential. It answers: do the people in the room actually have voice?
Intersectionality	The concept — developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw — that multiple dimensions of identity overlap and interact to shape each person's specific experience of power, privilege, and structural disadvantage. A Black francophone woman with a disability working in a civil society organisation faces a compounded, specific set of structural barriers that no single-dimension analysis can capture.
GESI	Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion — the analytical and operational framework required by Sida in RFLD's NAFASI programme and adopted by RFLD as its overarching DEI lens for programme and organisational work.
Protected Characteristic	A personal attribute that must not be the basis for adverse treatment in any RFLD employment, governance, programme, or partnership decision. RFLD's protected characteristics are set out in Section 4.
Positive Action	Lawful measures taken to improve representation or participation of underrepresented groups — such as targeted outreach, adapted recruitment processes, mentorship programmes, or capacity investment. Distinct from unlawful positive discrimination (quotas guaranteeing outcomes based solely on group membership).
Pay Gap	The difference in average earnings between groups — most commonly between women and men, but also between different national, ethnic, or linguistic groups. A pay gap can persist without deliberate pay discrimination, driven by structural factors such as occupational segregation, historical disadvantage, and differential access to opportunities.
Pay Equity	Equal pay for work of equal or comparable value, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, or any other personal characteristic. Pay equity is both a legal obligation and a feminist imperative.
Reasonable Adjustment	A modification to a working arrangement, work environment, or process that removes a substantial disadvantage experienced by a person with a disability — provided the adjustment does not impose a disproportionate burden on RFLD.
Language Justice	The principle that every RFLD staff member, partner, and beneficiary has the right to full and equitable participation in organisational life in a language in which they are genuinely competent — and that language access must be actively provided rather than assumed.

3. Foundational Principles — From Compliance to Transformation

3.1 Three Levels of DEI Ambition

RFLD explicitly positions its DEI work at the third and highest level of organisational ambition — transformation. The three levels are:

Level	Name	What It Means for RFLD
1	Compliance	Meeting the minimum legal requirements for non-discrimination in employment and programme delivery across Benin, Ghana, Senegal, and The Gambia. This is necessary but deeply insufficient. Compliance tells us what RFLD must not do to people. It does not tell us what RFLD must do for them.
2	Representation	Going beyond legal compliance to actively recruit, retain, and promote people from underrepresented groups — achieving better diversity of composition and presence in the organisation. Representation is a precondition for inclusion but does not guarantee it. A seat at the table that comes with no voice is not equity.
3	Transformation	Changing the culture, systems, power structures, and ways of working that perpetuate exclusion — so that RFLD's diversity is matched by genuine equity in voice, resources, opportunity, safety, and decision-making power. This requires examining who gets heard in meetings, whose languages are centred, whose care responsibilities are accommodated, whose career trajectories are supported, and whose perspectives shape organisational strategy.

3.2 RFLD's DEI Principles

Principle	Meaning in Practice
Equity, Not Uniformity	RFLD does not treat everyone identically. It responds to different needs with different levels of support, accommodation, and access in order to achieve genuinely fair outcomes. Treating everyone 'the same' in a context of deep structural inequality is not fairness — it is the reproduction of inequality in the name of neutrality.
Intersectionality as the Analytical Foundation	Every DEI analysis, every programme design decision, and every HR process applies an intersectional lens — asking not only 'how does this affect women?' but 'which women, in which circumstances, facing which compounding disadvantages, with which resources available to them?' Single-dimension analysis produces incomplete understanding and incomplete solutions.
African Feminist Analysis	RFLD's DEI framework is grounded in African feminist thought and practice — recognising the specific histories of colonialism, patriarchy, ethnic and religious power dynamics, and political authoritarianism that shape inequality in RFLD's operating contexts. RFLD does not import DEI frameworks designed for Global North corporate or government contexts without critical adaptation to its specific cultural, political, and geographic reality.
Internal and External Alignment	RFLD cannot credibly advocate for feminist change externally while practising discrimination, exclusion, or inequity internally. The same standards RFLD applies to its programme partners apply to RFLD itself — with equal rigour, equal accountability, and equal willingness to acknowledge and address failure.
Accountability With Learning	DEI failures at RFLD will occur — structural inequality does not stop at the office door. The measure of RFLD's commitment is how it responds to failure: with honest assessment, root-cause analysis, and genuine improvement, rather than defensiveness or denial.
Community-Centred Accountability	RFLD's DEI commitments are ultimately accountable to the women, communities, and activists it serves — not only to donors or sector norms. Perspectives of member organisations and programme beneficiaries on RFLD's organisational culture and DEI practice are actively sought and genuinely incorporated.

4. Protected Characteristics and Grounds of Protection

4.1 RFLD's Full List of Protected Characteristics

The following personal characteristics are protected under this Policy. No employment, governance, programme, or partnership decision at RFLD may be made on the basis of any of these characteristics, except where this Policy expressly provides for positive action to improve representation of an underrepresented group. Where national law in any RFLD country protects additional characteristics, those are also covered.

Category A — Identity	Category B — Background	Category C — Status
• Gender identity and gender expression • Sexual orientation • Ethnicity and race • National origin and nationality • Religion and belief (or none) • Language and linguistic identity • HIV status	• Socioeconomic background • Educational background and credentials • Geographic origin (urban / rural / regional) • Family structure and marital status • Age • Political opinion (where not conflicting with RFLD's mandate)	• Disability (physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health) • Pregnancy and maternity • Parental and caring responsibilities • Immigration and visa status • Former offender status (where not relevant to the role)

4.2 Types of Prohibited Discrimination

Type	Definition
Direct Discrimination	Treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Example: not shortlisting a candidate for interview because of their nationality or religion.
Indirect Discrimination	Applying a policy or practice that appears neutral but has the effect of disadvantaging people with a particular protected characteristic — and cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Example: requiring all staff to attend meetings in English, which systematically disadvantages francophone colleagues.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is addressed specifically in the Safeguarding & PSEAH Policy (RFLD-POL-SFG-v1.0).
Victimisation	Treating a person adversely because they have raised a concern about discrimination, participated in an investigation, or supported another person who has. Victimisation under this Policy is a disciplinary offence under RFLD's HR Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.
Associative Discrimination	Treating a person less favourably because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic — for example, treating a staff member adversely because their partner has a disability.

5. Intersectional Analysis — Who We Are and Who We Serve

5.1 RFLD's Structural Position in the Sector

RFLD occupies a complex structural position in African civil society. As an intermediary that holds institutional donor funds and distributes them to member organisations, RFLD itself exercises significant financial, programmatic, and relational power. That power — over who receives resources, on what terms, with what accountability burdens — must be recognised as a DEI issue, not only a governance issue. Equity in RFLD's sub-granting practices, in the accessibility of its application processes, and in the language and format of its requirements are as much DEI matters as who sits in RFLD's own offices.

5.2 Dimensions of Intersectional Disadvantage Relevant to RFLD

Dimension	Current Reality at RFLD	Policy Commitments in This Document
Gender x Language	Francophone women in RFLD's programme countries face a double structural disadvantage: gender inequity in civil society leadership and language exclusion from RFLD's English-dominant senior culture.	Language justice provisions (Section 10); francophone-targeted outreach; bilingual operations standard; French-language career development.
Disability x Geography	Disability is systematically underreported in RFLD's operating contexts due to stigma. Staff and programme participants from rural programme areas may face compound barriers of disability and geographic remoteness.	Disability data collection; accessibility audit programme; reasonable adjustment framework (Section 11); digital accessibility standards.
Age x Seniority	Young women activists who are RFLD programme beneficiaries are excluded from RFLD governance and decision-making structures. Young staff face structural barriers to advancement in a sector that over-values credentials and experience.	Youth representation commitment (Section 15); mentorship programme; skills-based (not credentials-based) promotion criteria.
Sexual Orientation x Legal Context	LGBTQ+ staff and programme participants face very different legal contexts across RFLD's 15+ countries — from decriminalisation to active prosecution. Genuine inclusion requires acknowledging and managing this range.	Explicit LGBTQ+ inclusion statement; confidential support; safety risk protocol for country placements; no SOGI disclosure requirement (Section 14).
Socioeconomic Background x Sector Entry	International civil society has structural barriers to entry for people from lower-income backgrounds — unpaid internships, postgraduate credential requirements, recruitment through existing elite networks.	Paid-only internship policy; skills-based shortlisting; community and vocational education outreach; stipend support where needed.
Ethnicity x Civil Society Power	In international civil society, structural racism — including the over-representation of Global North nationalities in leadership roles — shapes who is trusted with institutional resources and whose analysis is centred as authoritative.	Ethnicity representation data; equitable promotion tracking by ethnicity; explicit African feminist framing in all RFLD's analytical work.

6. Equity in Recruitment and Selection

6.1 Equity by Design — Before Applications Open

The most powerful DEI intervention in recruitment occurs before a single application is received — in how roles are designed, described, advertised, and assessed. RFLD embeds equity by design in every recruitment process:

- Job descriptions are reviewed for exclusionary language before advertising: unnecessarily masculine-coded framing; credential requirements disproportionate to actual role needs; travel or availability demands that disadvantage caregivers without offering flexibility alternatives; and framing that implicitly privileges specific institutional backgrounds.
- Selection criteria rigorously distinguish essential from desirable requirements. Essential criteria reflect genuine job needs — not a default reproduction of the profile of the last person who held the role.
- RFLD does not use unpaid trial periods, unpaid internships, or unpaid test assignments at any grade. All assessment tasks that require significant work are compensated.
- Interview questions are reviewed in advance by the panel or HR lead to remove any question that encodes bias — including questions about family plans, care responsibilities, or personal circumstances that would not be relevant to the role's performance requirements.

6.2 Active Outreach to Underrepresented Candidates

Passive advertising will not change the demographic composition of RFLD's candidate pool. RFLD commits to active, targeted outreach for every vacancy above Grade 1:

- Francophone outreach: Every vacancy is advertised in French and distributed through francophone civil society networks, including RFLD's own Sahel programme partner network, French-language NGO platforms, universities in francophone West Africa, and relevant regional professional associations.
- Geographic diversity outreach: Vacancies relevant to specific programme countries are distributed through in-country partner organisations and networks to reach candidates with direct community knowledge, language capability, and contextual understanding.
- Disability-inclusive advertising: All vacancy notices explicitly state that RFLD welcomes applications from persons with disabilities and commits to making reasonable adjustments to both the recruitment process and the working environment.
- Youth pathways: For Grade 1 and internship roles, RFLD proactively partners with universities and youth-led civil society organisations in programme countries — including those that serve young women and girls who would not otherwise be in RFLD's recruitment network.
- Non-traditional credentials: Where a role requires technical competence, RFLD's shortlisting process explicitly considers equivalent experience, community-based learning, and vocational qualifications alongside formal academic credentials.

6.3 Diverse Selection Panels

Every selection panel for roles at Grade 3 and above must include at minimum: one panel member of a different gender from the other panel members; and one panel member of a different nationality or linguistic background. All panel members complete RFLD's unconscious bias training before participating in any recruitment process. Panel scoring records are retained for 24 months in the HR file — not merely the outcome, but the documented rationale for each decision at each stage.

6.4 Positive Action in Selection

Where two or more candidates are substantially equal in merit and relevant qualifications at the shortlisting or final selection stage, RFLD may lawfully favour a candidate from a group identified as underrepresented in the relevant role level or function. Underrepresented groups eligible for positive action consideration are determined by RFLD's annual DEI data review (Section 19). Currently, these include: francophone candidates for roles above Grade 2; candidates from Sahel programme countries for programme roles; and candidates with declared disabilities for all roles. Positive action decisions are documented with justification in the selection record.

6.5 Monitoring Recruitment Equity — The Four Funnel Metrics

RFLD tracks diversity at four stages of every recruitment process at Grade 2 and above, compiled into the quarterly DEI Dashboard:

- Stage 1 — Applicant pool diversity: Who applied? (by gender, language group, nationality, and self-declared disability status)
- Stage 2 — Shortlist diversity: Who was shortlisted? Is there systematic attrition of any group at this stage?
- Stage 3 — Interview diversity: Who was interviewed? Is there systematic attrition of any group between shortlist and interview?
- Stage 4 — Appointment: Who was appointed? Is there systematic attrition of any group between interview and offer?

Where a consistent pattern of attrition for any group at any stage is identified across two or more consecutive recruitment processes, the Finance Manager and Executive Director convene a process review within 30 days.

7. Pay Equity — Framework, Analysis, and Remediation

7.1 RFLD's Pay Equity Commitment

RFLD is committed to equal pay for work of equal value across every dimension of diversity. Pay equity is not a statistical aspiration — it is a legal obligation and a feminist imperative. An RFLD that pays women less than men, or francophone staff less than anglophone staff, for equivalent work, cannot credibly advance economic justice as a programme goal. The integrity of RFLD's external advocacy on women's economic rights depends on the integrity of its internal pay practices.

7.2 The Pay Equity Analysis — Annual Process

RFLD conducts an annual Pay Equity Analysis as part of the budget review cycle, using the methodology in Annex C. The analysis:

- Compares median and mean salaries at each grade level, disaggregated by gender, nationality, and language group (francophone / anglophone / lusophone).
- Identifies gaps exceeding 5% between groups for equivalent roles at the same grade — the 5% threshold reflects both the data precision available and RFLD's commitment to catching gaps before they become material.
- Controls for legitimate variables: specific technical qualifications genuinely required for a particular post; years of relevant experience within the salary band; and office cost-of-living differentials where RFLD operates a local salary scale.
- Calculates a Pay Gap figure — the unexplained gap after controlling for legitimate variables — for each dimension analysed: gender, language group, and nationality.
- Tracks year-on-year movement in each gap figure to identify whether trends are improving or worsening.

7.3 Pay Gap Disclosure — Commitment to Honest Reporting

RFLD publicly discloses its gender pay gap and its language group pay gap in the Annual DEI Progress Report (Annex E) and at rflgd.org/rfld-report/. RFLD commits to honest disclosure — including where the gap has widened compared to the prior year, where progress is slower than targeted, and where the root causes are structural rather than easily remedied. The pay gap figures are disclosed as both mean and median, accompanied by a narrative explanation of causes and the current remediation plan. Donors and Board members receive the full analysis; the public version is appropriately summarised.

7.4 Pay Gap Remediation Framework

Where the Pay Equity Analysis identifies an unexplained gap, RFLD initiates a structured remediation process within the following budget cycle:

Step	Action	Detail
1	Immediate equity adjustment	Where the unexplained gap exceeds 10%, a salary correction is applied in the following payroll cycle. Lower-paid group members in the affected role level receive an uplift. No salary reductions.
2	Structural cause analysis	Finance Manager and ED investigate: Is this a recruitment issue (lower-paid roles disproportionately filled by one group)? A promotion issue (one group advancing more slowly)? A negotiation gap (some groups negotiating higher starting salaries)? A grade classification issue?
3	Structural intervention	Based on cause analysis: blind salary band setting; non-negotiable salary offers within bands to eliminate negotiation advantage; accelerated promotion review for underrepresented groups; reclassification of roles where necessary.
4	Progress tracking	Remediation plan milestones tracked quarterly by Finance Manager. Reported to Board at next BFC meeting. Tracked in annual DEI Progress Report.

7.5 Salary Band Transparency

RFLD operates published salary bands at each grade (RFLD-POL-HR-v1.0 Section 7.2). All staff know the salary band for their grade and for the grades above theirs. The salary range within a band is not confidential — staff may discuss their remuneration with colleagues without penalty. Salary transparency within bands is a DEI measure: it reduces the information asymmetry that allows unexplained pay differentials to persist undetected.

7.6 Benefits Equity

Benefits — health insurance, parental leave, professional development allowances, and wellbeing provisions — are available equitably to all staff at the same grade level regardless of gender, nationality, language, contract type, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Any benefit that is structurally accessible to some groups and not others — for example, a parental leave policy that functions better for staff in some countries than others — triggers a benefit equity review.

8. Inclusive Onboarding and Retention

8.1 Onboarding as a DEI Intervention

The first weeks of employment establish whether a new staff member will feel included, valued, and able to contribute authentically — or whether they will begin a process of assimilation to a dominant culture that does not fully reflect who they are. RFLD's onboarding programme is designed to be inclusive by default:

- Onboarding materials are available in English and French. Portuguese support is available on request. Glossaries of key RFLD terms are provided in all three languages.
- New staff are connected with a peer buddy from a different background within the first week — creating an intentional informal relationship across difference from the outset.
- This DEI Policy is introduced in the first week of onboarding — framed not as a compliance document but as a core expression of RFLD's organisational identity.
- Reasonable adjustment needs are identified at the offer stage and implemented before the first day — not as an afterthought when a new staff member has already arrived to an inaccessible environment.
- The onboarding schedule accommodates different working hours, religious observances, and care responsibilities — rather than assuming all new staff have identical availability and capacity in their first two weeks.

8.2 Retention — Inclusion Must Be Sustained

Diverse recruitment without inclusive retention produces high turnover and a damaged institutional reputation. RFLD actively monitors and addresses retention patterns across DEI dimensions:

- Annual anonymous staff inclusion survey: Specifically asks about inclusion experience disaggregated by gender, language group, nationality, and disability status. Results shared with all staff. Analysed for patterns — where a specific group consistently reports lower inclusion scores, the cause is investigated.
- Exit interview DEI analysis: Exit interview themes (RFLD-POL-HR-v1.0 Annex F) are reviewed quarterly for DEI patterns — are particular groups leaving at higher rates? Are specific inclusion concerns recurring?
- Promotion equity tracking: Promotion rates are tracked by gender, language group, and nationality annually. Systematic under-promotion of any group triggers investigation and remediation.
- Informal exclusion monitoring: Managers are trained to recognise and interrupt informal exclusion — meeting dynamics where some voices are systematically marginalised, social patterns that exclude on language or cultural lines, and micro-aggressions that accumulate into hostile environments.

9. Inclusive Leadership and Management

9.1 What Inclusive Leadership Requires at RFLD

Inclusive leadership is not a personality trait — it is a set of learnable, practicable behaviours that create the conditions for every team member to contribute fully. Every RFLD manager is accountable for the following behaviours:

Behaviour	What It Looks Like in RFLD's Context
Active listening across difference	Creating deliberate space in meetings and team interactions for all voices — specifically those of francophone colleagues, junior staff, and those from under-represented backgrounds. Calling in quieter voices. Interrupting patterns of specific team members being talked over or having their contributions attributed to others.
Language equity in team settings	Facilitating bilingual meetings when the team includes both French and English speakers. Circulating summaries in both languages. Not defaulting to English as the working language in mixed teams when French could be used or alternated.
Equitable task allocation	Monitoring whether administrative, note-taking, or 'office housework' tasks are systematically allocated to women, junior staff, or staff from particular backgrounds. Rotating these tasks deliberately and equitably.
Recognising and interrupting bias	Actively naming when a bias pattern is visible — in a meeting, a decision, or a process — and inviting the team to examine and correct it. Not leaving this to the affected staff member to raise.
Flexible and contextual management	Understanding that colleagues have different working patterns, cultural norms, care responsibilities, and communication styles. Managing to outcomes rather than to presenteeism. Accommodating difference proactively.
Psychological safety	Creating conditions in which team members can raise ideas, challenge each other, make mistakes, and ask for support without fear of ridicule or adverse consequence. Acknowledging their own leadership errors and uncertainty openly.
DEI accountability	Including DEI performance as a genuine component of their own annual performance review — not as a box-tick but as a substantive assessment of whether their team has become more or less inclusive over the year.

9.2 DEI in Performance Review

From 2026, RFLD's annual performance review process (RFLD-POL-HR-v1.0 Annex C) includes an explicit DEI competency assessment for all staff at Grade 3 and above. The assessment covers: evidence of inclusive team leadership (or inclusive peer conduct for non-managers); contribution to language equity in shared spaces; response to observed exclusion or bias; and engagement with RFLD's DEI learning and improvement processes. This assessment carries weight in performance ratings and promotion decisions.

10. Language Justice and Francophone Equity

10.1 Why Language Justice Is a DEI Priority for RFLD

RFLD's geographic mandate is overwhelmingly francophone — the majority of its 670 member organisations, its most complex programme operations, and its most politically critical programme environments are in French-speaking West and Central Africa. Yet English has historically functioned as the de facto dominant language of RFLD's institutional culture, donor reporting, senior communications, and governance processes. This asymmetry is not neutral — it reproduces the colonial-era language hierarchy that RFLD's feminist advocacy explicitly challenges, and it constitutes a form of structural discrimination against francophone colleagues, partners, and beneficiaries.

Language justice at RFLD means: ensuring that French and English are genuinely co-equal working languages across all functions; that no career opportunity, governance role, or institutional process is systematically inaccessible to French speakers; and that RFLD does not treat English fluency as a proxy for competence or professionalism.

10.2 RFLD's Language Justice Commitments

- All core RFLD policy documents — including this Policy — are available in both English and French within 30 days of approval. Portuguese versions of key policies are produced within 90 days.
- All cross-office communications above routine operational messages are produced in both English and French, or accompanied by a summary in the other language.
- Board and senior management meetings in which both French and English speakers are present are facilitated bilingually. Interpretation support is provided where required.
- All vacancy advertisements are published in both English and French, regardless of the operational location of the role.
- RFLD's annual all-staff learning day is fully bilingual.
- The DEI Action Plan (Section 20) includes a specific target for the proportion of Grade 3 and above positions held by francophone staff, reviewed annually.
- Language learning support — formal language training, informal peer exchange, and immersion opportunities — is available to all permanent staff as part of their professional development allowance, specifically to support francophone staff developing English capability and anglophone staff developing French capability.

10.3 Lusophone and Local Language Access

RFLD's growing engagement with lusophone civil society — particularly through partnerships in Guinea-Bissau and connections to Mozambique and Angola — and its programme activities in communities with diverse local languages creates obligations beyond French and English. RFLD commits to: producing programme-facing materials in local languages where feasible; ensuring beneficiary-facing communications are accessible in the primary language of the beneficiaries; and including local language capacity as a consideration in programme staff recruitment.

11. Disability Inclusion

11.1 RFLD's Approach to Disability

RFLD adopts the social model of disability — recognising that it is structural and environmental barriers, not impairment itself, that exclude people with disabilities from full participation. RFLD's disability inclusion commitment is therefore about removing those barriers, not about managing disability as a personal deficit. This applies both internally — in how RFLD recruits, supports, and develops disabled staff — and programmatically — in how RFLD designs and delivers programmes that reach women and girls with disabilities.

11.2 Reasonable Adjustments

RFLD makes reasonable adjustments to any aspect of employment or programme participation that creates a substantial disadvantage for a person with a disability, where the adjustment does not impose a disproportionate burden. Adjustments may include:

- Modified working hours or flexible attendance arrangements.
- Accessible physical workspace — including ramps, adapted workstations, accessible bathroom facilities.
- Assistive technology — screen readers, voice recognition, captioning software, large print materials.
- Adapted interview formats — including written responses in place of oral, extended time, accessible venues.
- Changes to communication formats — accessible document formats, audio alternatives to written material.
- Alternative task allocation where specific job elements cannot be adapted.
- Psychological support and adjusted performance review criteria during disability-related health episodes.

Reasonable adjustment requests are made using the form in Annex D. The Executive Director reviews all requests within 10 business days and communicates the decision in writing. Refusals must be accompanied by a written justification demonstrating why the adjustment would impose a disproportionate burden. Refusals may be challenged through the grievance process or the DEI complaints mechanism in Section 21.

11.3 Disability Data and Accessibility Audit

RFLD currently lacks systematic data on the disability profile of its workforce. By December 2026, RFLD will complete: (a) an anonymised staff disability and accessibility needs survey; (b) a physical accessibility audit of all four offices; (c) a digital accessibility review of RFLD's primary digital tools and public-facing platforms; and (d) a programme activity accessibility review covering RFLD's major active programmes. Findings will be reported to the Board and incorporated into the 2027 DEI Action Plan.

12. Pregnancy, Parental Status, and Caring Responsibilities

12.1 Non-Discrimination on Parental and Caring Grounds

No employment decision at RFLD — including recruitment, promotion, assignment, or performance assessment — may be influenced by a staff member's pregnancy, maternity or paternity status, parental status, or caring responsibilities. RFLD actively recognises that norms of professional availability and presenteeism in international civil society systematically disadvantage carers — who are disproportionately women — and actively works to create alternative norms. RFLD does not ask about pregnancy or family plans during recruitment.

12.2 Supporting Parents and Carers

Beyond the formal parental leave provisions in RFLD's HR Policy (RFLD-POL-HR-v1.0 Section 9.4), RFLD commits to:

- Flexible working arrangements for parents returning from parental leave — including phased returns and temporary reduction in working hours.
- Meeting scheduling that does not systematically exclude staff with school-run or other care commitments — for example, avoiding meetings before 09:00 and after 17:00 as a default.
- No penalty in performance assessment for reduced intensity during parental leave periods — appraisals assess performance during working periods only.
- Carer's leave entitlement as specified in the HR Policy, treated as a medical and human need rather than a favour.
- Actively including parental and caring experience as valid professional development in competency assessments — skills such as project management, resource allocation, and stakeholder communication are developed through caring as well as professional roles.

13. Religious and Cultural Inclusion

13.1 Approach

RFLD operates across majority-Muslim and majority-Christian contexts, as well as contexts with significant traditional and syncretic religious practice. Religious observance and cultural practices affect working patterns, dress, dietary requirements, and interpersonal norms. RFLD respects and accommodates this diversity without requiring any staff member or programme participant to compromise their religious or cultural practice for the convenience of RFLD's institutional preferences.

13.2 Specific Religious and Cultural Accommodations

- Prayer time and Friday obligations: Staff observing daily prayer or Friday Jumu'ah may adjust their working schedule to accommodate religious practice — this is not recorded as annual leave or unauthorised absence. Arrangements are agreed with the line manager.
- Religious holidays: RFLD recognises public holidays in each office country. Where a staff member observes a religious holiday not gazetted locally, they may take this as annual leave or work flexibly to accommodate it.
- Dress and appearance: RFLD has no dress code that conflicts with religious or cultural dress practice. No staff member is required to remove or conceal any item of religious or cultural dress — including the hijab, turban, head coverings, or traditional dress — as a condition of employment or programme participation.
- Food and hospitality: RFLD events, training sessions, and team activities where food is provided must accommodate halal, kosher, vegetarian, and other dietary requirements as standard. Alcohol is never served at mandatory RFLD events.
- Fasting periods: Staff observing Ramadan or other fasting periods may adjust meeting schedules, break times, and energy-intensive work activities during the fasting day, with line manager agreement.

14. LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Safety

14.1 RFLD's Position

RFLD explicitly and unreservedly affirms the dignity, safety, and full humanity of LGBTQ+ colleagues, programme partners, and beneficiaries. This commitment is grounded in RFLD's feminist analysis — which recognises that the oppression of LGBTQ+ people is inseparable from patriarchal systems that police and punish non-normative gender expression and sexuality — and in RFLD's human rights mandate, which recognises freedom from discrimination and violence as universal rights.

RFLD acknowledges the complexity of this commitment in its operating environment. Several of RFLD's programme countries have laws that criminalise same-sex relationships. RFLD does not require LGBTQ+ staff to be publicly 'out' in any RFLD context, and takes seriously the safety implications of operating as an LGBTQ+-inclusive employer in hostile legal and social environments. The goal is genuine safety and genuine inclusion — not performative statements that create visibility without protection.

14.2 Specific LGBTQ+ Inclusion Commitments

- No staff member is required to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in any RFLD process — including HR forms, performance reviews, travel documentation, or any other organisational context.
- All RFLD HR forms, policy documents, and programme materials use gender-inclusive language and allow for gender-non-binary self-identification where a gender field is required.
- RFLD's parental leave and benefits policies apply equally regardless of the gender of both parents and the legal form of the parental relationship.
- RFLD does not make any employment decision — including country assignments, travel requirements, or programme roles — that would require an LGBTQ+ staff member to accept a materially elevated personal safety risk without their fully informed consent and the availability of alternative arrangements.
- Any staff member who is LGBTQ+ and faces a specific safety concern in connection with their RFLD role — including travel to programme countries, programme activities, or team events — may raise this confidentially with the Executive Director or DPO. RFLD will provide support and, where necessary, alternative arrangements, without requiring the staff member to explain or justify their safety concern.
- RFLD does not engage with programme partners or suppliers who explicitly discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals in their own employment or programme practices — subject to the operational limitations of working in complex contexts where few alternatives may exist.

15. Age and Intergenerational Equity

15.1 Challenging Age-Based Exclusion in Both Directions

Age-based exclusion at RFLD operates in two directions: ageism that dismisses the experience and knowledge of older staff; and a youth exclusion that bars young women — including those who are the primary beneficiaries of RFLD's programmes — from meaningful decision-making roles. RFLD challenges both.

15.2 Youth Representation

RFLD's programmes engage young women activists, digital rights defenders, and environmental advocates. These young women have direct, current knowledge of the issues RFLD works on — knowledge that is systematically undervalued in institutional structures that over-reward formal credentials and professional track records. RFLD commits to:

- Establishing a youth advisory mechanism — a formally constituted Youth Advisory Panel of young women leaders from RFLD's programme countries, convened annually to provide input into programme strategy and organisational priorities. Panel members are compensated for their time.
- Explicit minimum 25% representation of young women (under 35) in RFLD's consultative committees, learning events, and external speaking representations.
- Grade 1 and intern recruitment specifically targeting recent graduates and young women from civil society backgrounds who may not meet traditional graduate programme criteria but demonstrate strong feminist commitment and community knowledge.

15.3 Older Staff and Knowledge Retention

RFLD recognises the specific value of institutional knowledge, long-term relationship capital, and political acumen accumulated by more experienced staff. RFLD does not make decisions about training access, technology adoption, or role transitions based on assumptions about age-related capacity. Structured knowledge transfer between experienced and newer staff is embedded in RFLD's learning culture.

16. Board and Governance Diversity

16.1 Why Governance Diversity Matters

RFLD's Board of Directors holds ultimate accountability for its mission, finances, and governance. A Board that is homogeneous in any single dimension — gender, nationality, language, professional background, or age — is a governance risk, not merely a DEI gap. Diverse governance bodies make better decisions, represent a wider range of stakeholder perspectives, and provide stronger oversight of the diversity of risks RFLD faces.

16.2 Board Composition Standards

Dimension	Standard and Rationale
Gender	Minimum 70% women Board members at all times, consistent with RFLD's feminist mandate. Gender non-binary Board members are counted within this figure.
Nationality / Geography	At minimum, Board members from 3 different countries at all times; at minimum, 50% of Board members from RFLD's active programme countries. Prevents governance capture by a single national perspective.
Language	At minimum one fluent French speaker and one fluent English speaker among permanent Board members at all times. French-language Board participation is facilitated through interpretation where necessary.
Professional Background	A minimum combination across the Board of: programme expertise (women's rights / human rights); finance and audit; legal; civil society leadership; and digital / technology. No single professional background constitutes more than 40% of Board members.
Age	At minimum one Board member aged under 35 at all times. RFLD's Youth Advisory Panel has the right to nominate one youth representative for Board consideration at each Board renewal cycle.
Disability	RFLD actively recruits for disability representation on the Board and ensures that Board participation is structurally accessible — with accessible venues, materials in accessible formats, and remuneration that does not exclude people who cannot absorb unpaid participation costs.

16.3 Board Renewal and Succession

Board recruitment follows the same equity principles as staff recruitment — including diverse shortlisting panels, positive action where appropriate, and assessment based on substantive competence and diversity contribution rather than existing network connections. Board composition is assessed annually against the standards above and reported in the Annual DEI Progress Report. Where a composition standard is not met, the next Board recruitment cycle specifically prioritises the underrepresented dimension.

17. DEI in Programme Design and Delivery

17.1 GESI as the Programmatic Expression of DEI

RFLD's GESI (Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion) framework is the programmatic expression of this Policy's principles. Every programme design process, every partner selection, every programme evaluation, and every donor report is assessed through a GESI lens that asks: Who benefits? Who is excluded? What structural barriers prevent the most marginalised from participating? How does the programme address — or inadvertently reinforce — existing inequalities?

17.2 Mandatory Programme DEI Standards

- Minimum 50% women's participation in all RFLD programme activities — workshop participants, beneficiaries, consultation respondents, and decision-makers in programme governance structures.
- Gender-disaggregated data collection for all programme indicators — not merely as a donor reporting requirement but as a genuine accountability mechanism for RFLD's feminist mission.
- Intersectional programme reach analysis — every programme report assesses reach disaggregated by at least gender and age, and where data is available, by disability status, language group, and geographic location.
- Accessible programme design — all RFLD training materials, workshop formats, and community engagement activities are designed to be accessible to participants with varying literacy levels, different physical abilities, and different learning styles.
- Community feedback mechanisms — every programme activity above USD 5,000 includes a structured mechanism for beneficiaries and community members to provide honest feedback on the programme's inclusivity and quality.

17.3 Safeguarding and DEI

RFLD's Safeguarding and PSEAH Policy (RFLD-POL-SFG-v1.0) is understood as a DEI instrument — because the people most at risk of harm in RFLD's programme contexts are those who face intersecting structural disadvantages: young women; women with disabilities; LGBTQ+ individuals in repressive contexts; activists under state surveillance. Safeguarding standards and DEI standards reinforce each other.

18. Partner and Supplier DEI Expectations

18.1 Extending the DEI Standard

RFLD's DEI commitments cannot be confined to RFLD's own offices. Where RFLD provides resources to partners, it is accountable for the equity of its resource transfer — including whether RFLD's own processes systematically advantage particular types of organisations over others, and whether RFLD's programmatic requirements inadvertently exclude less formally institutionalised grassroots organisations.

18.2 DEI in Partner Selection and Sub-Granting

- RFLD actively resources organisations led by and serving the most marginalised women — including organisations led by women with disabilities, organisations working with LGBTQ+ women in hostile legal environments, and grassroots collectives without formal NGO registration.
- RFLD's sub-grant application processes are designed to be accessible to organisations with limited institutional capacity — with plain language application forms, bilingual support, and simplified financial reporting for small grants.
- RFLD monitors the diversity profile of its sub-grant portfolio annually — tracking the geographic, linguistic, and thematic diversity of funded organisations — and reports this in the Annual DEI Progress Report.

18.3 Supplier Expectations

RFLD includes a DEI standard clause in contracts with significant suppliers — requiring that they have a non-discrimination employment policy and do not actively discriminate against any group on any of the protected characteristics in Section 4. Suppliers who are found to actively discriminate against employees or clients are subject to contract review.

19. Measurement, Reporting, and Accountability

19.1 The DEI Dashboard — Quarterly Metrics

The Finance Manager (with ED oversight) maintains a quarterly DEI Dashboard covering:

Domain	Key Metrics	Disaggregation
Workforce composition	Headcount; grades by gender; grades by language group; grades by nationality	By office; by grade; by contract type
Recruitment equity	Applicant, shortlist, interview, and appointment diversity at each stage	By gender; language group; nationality; disclosed disability
Pay equity	Mean and median salary by grade; unexplained pay gap figure	By gender; language group; nationality
Retention	Staff turnover rate; voluntary turnover by group; promotion rate	By gender; language group; nationality; grade
Inclusion experience	Annual staff survey inclusion score; disaggregated by group	By gender; language group; office location
Programme reach	Beneficiary reach disaggregated by gender and age	By programme; by country; by activity type
Partner diversity	Sub-grant portfolio diversity — geographic, linguistic, thematic	By tier; by country; by activity focus
Training completion	DEI-related training completion rates	By staff category; by office

19.2 Annual DEI Progress Report

The Executive Director produces an Annual DEI Progress Report, using the template in Annex E, published on rflgd.org/rfld-report/ and presented to the Board each year. The Report:

- Presents the DEI Dashboard metrics for the year, with year-on-year comparison.
- Assesses progress against each commitment in the DEI Action Plan (Section 20), with honest assessment of where RFLD is on track, ahead of target, or behind.
- Presents the gender pay gap and language group pay gap with cause analysis and remediation status.
- Describes notable DEI challenges encountered during the year and how they were addressed.
- Sets out specific DEI priorities for the following year.

RFLD commits to honest public reporting — including where progress has been insufficient, where gaps have grown, and where structural barriers have proved more resistant than anticipated. Performative reports that project a false image of DEI success are as much a governance failure as the DEI gaps they conceal.

19.3 Board Accountability

The Board receives the Annual DEI Progress Report and actively reviews it — not as a ritual approval of a management document, but as a genuine governance accountability exercise. The Board specifically reviews: whether targets were met; whether the pay gap analysis was independently validated; whether the staff inclusion survey findings are credible; and whether the DEI Action Plan for the coming year is sufficiently ambitious and resourced. The Board Chair is personally accountable for ensuring RFLD's DEI governance is genuine.

20. DEI Action Plan 2026–2029

The following commitments form RFLD's DEI Action Plan for the NAFASI programme period. Progress is reviewed annually and reported in the Annual DEI Progress Report. Targets are revised based on annual data. The Action Plan is a commitment, not a ceiling — where progress is faster than targeted, RFLD moves the target.

#	Commitment	Target	By When	Lead
1	Francophone representation at Grade 3+	Minimum 35% of Grade 3 and above roles held by francophone-first-language staff	December 2027	ED
2	Sahel country representation	At least 2 staff from Mali, Burkina Faso, or Niger at Grade 2 or above	December 2027	ED + Hiring Managers
3	Bilingual operations	100% of core policy documents available in French within 30 days of approval	Ongoing from May 2026	Finance Manager + Communications
4	Disability data collection	Complete workforce disability survey; publish results in Annual DEI Report	December 2026	ED + Finance Manager
5	Pay gap reduction — gender	Reduce unexplained gender pay gap to zero (or demonstrate it is zero already)	December 2027 (analysis complete 2026)	Finance Manager
6	Pay gap reduction — language group	Reduce unexplained francophone/anglophone pay gap to below 5%	December 2027	Finance Manager
7	Youth representation	Establish Youth Advisory Panel; achieve 25% under-35 participation in all major consultation processes	June 2027	Programmes Lead
8	Board composition	Meet all Board diversity standards (Section 16.2) at next renewal cycle	Next Board renewal	Board Chair
9	Inclusive recruitment training	100% of hiring managers complete unconscious bias and inclusive recruitment training	December 2026	ED + Training Lead
10	DEI in partner portfolio	35% of sub-grant portfolio by value directed to grassroots/community-based women's organisations with budgets under USD 200K	December 2028	Finance Manager + Programmes Lead
11	Reasonable adjustment infrastructure	Accessibility audits of all 4 offices complete; minimum 2 offices with full physical accessibility	December 2027	ED + Office Managers
12	LGBTQ+ safety protocol	Documented LGBTQ+ country safety risk assessment protocol in place for all travel and country assignments	December 2026	ED + DPO
13	Staff inclusion survey	Annual staff inclusion	Annually from	ED

#	Commitment	Target	By When	Lead
		survey with minimum 75% response rate; results publicly shared (aggregated)	December 2026	
14	DEI in performance reviews	DEI competency included in annual performance review for all Grade 3+ staff	January 2027 review cycle	ED

21. Complaints, Enforcement, and Policy Review

21.1 Making a DEI Complaint

Any person — staff member, Board member, partner representative, beneficiary, or supplier — who believes they have been treated unfairly in violation of this Policy may raise a formal DEI complaint through any of the following routes:

- Internal staff complaints: Submit a formal grievance using the HR Policy Grievance Procedure (RFLD-POL-HR-v1.0 Section 13). DEI complaints are given priority processing under the HR grievance procedure.
- External complaints (partners and beneficiaries): Submit using RFLD's Whistleblowing Policy reporting channels (RFLD-POL-WB-v1.0 Section 5) — including the online form, the ethics email, or the phone hotlines.
- Board-level complaints about management conduct: Submit directly to the Board Chair via admin@rflgd.org.

DEI complaints are investigated using the investigation procedures in RFLD's Whistleblowing Policy (RFLD-POL-WB-v1.0 Section 11). Complainants are protected from retaliation under the full protections of the Whistleblowing Policy. Complaints are acknowledged within 3 business days.

21.2 Enforcement and Sanctions

Confirmed violations of this Policy — including acts of discrimination, harassment on protected grounds, or deliberate exclusion — are treated as disciplinary offences under RFLD's HR Policy (RFLD-POL-HR-v1.0). Sanctions range from written warning through to summary dismissal, depending on the severity, intentionality, and impact of the violation. RFLD does not treat DEI violations as 'softer' misconduct than other policy breaches — a culture that is exclusionary undermines RFLD's mission as directly as financial misconduct.

21.3 Policy Review

This Policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Director with input from all office leads and from RFLD's staff representation mechanism, and presented to the Board for approval. An out-of-cycle review is triggered by: a significant DEI incident; a material change in RFLD's operating structure; a donor instruction relating to GESI or DEI standards; or evidence from the annual DEI data review that current provisions are inadequate. All amendments are communicated to all staff within 30 days of Board approval, in both English and French.

21.4 Version History

Version	Date	Summary	Approved By
1.0	May 2026	Initial adoption — developed as a governance and credibility requirement aligned to RFLD's feminist mandate, Sida NAFASI GESI obligations, and GIZ/BMZ SEA-T cohort DEI commitments. Covers: internal hiring equity; pay equity framework with annual analysis and public disclosure; inclusive culture standards across 11 dimensions of diversity; 14-point DEI Action Plan 2026–2029; board diversity standards; and programme GESI integration.	Board of Directors

Policy Approval

Executive Director — Gloria Sekonou	Board Chair	Staff Representative (Consultation)
Name:	Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:	Title:

Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:	Date:

KEY CONTACTS FOR DEI MATTERS

General DEI enquiries: admin@rflgd.org DEI complaints and ethics reports: integrity@rflgd.org Executive Director: agueh.dossi@rflgd.org Cotonou HQ: +229 01 50 02 46 19 | Accra: +233 53 496 8866 | Dakar: +221 77 541 84 37 Speak-Up Form (for complaints): rflgd.org/rfld-internal-policies/

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Page 28

Annex A — DEI Data Collection and Monitoring Framework

INSTRUCTIONS

Data collected annually through anonymised staff survey and HR system analysis. Compiled by Finance Manager. Reviewed by ED. Presented to Board in Annual DEI Report. No individual can be identified from the data in any report.

Data Point	Collection Method	Frequency	Disaggregation
Staff headcount by grade	HR system	Quarterly	Gender; language group; nationality; office
Recruitment funnel diversity	Recruitment tracking form	Per recruitment process	Gender; language group; nationality; disclosed disability
Salary data by grade	Payroll system	Annual	Gender; language group; nationality
Unexplained pay gap figure	Pay equity analysis (Annex C)	Annual	Gender; language group
Staff turnover rate	HR system	Quarterly	Gender; language group; grade
Promotion rate	HR system	Annual	Gender; language group; nationality
Inclusion experience score	Anonymous staff survey	Annual	Gender; language group; office; age group
Disability profile (opt-in)	Anonymised voluntary survey	Annual	By office (aggregate only)
Programme beneficiary reach	Programme reports	Per programme cycle	Gender; age; disability (where available)
Sub-grant portfolio diversity	Grants management system	Annual	Geography; language; organisational size
Board composition	Board records	Annual	Gender; nationality; age; language; professional background
DEI training completion	HR training log	Annual	By staff category and office

Annex B — Inclusive Recruitment Process Checklist

INSTRUCTIONS

Completed by the hiring manager and HR lead for every recruitment process at Grade 2 and above. Filed in the recruitment record. Countersigned by Executive Director before offer is made.

#	Inclusive Recruitment Step	Complete	Notes
1	Job description reviewed for exclusionary language — masculine-coded terms, disproportionate credential requirements, inflexible availability assumptions	☐ ✓	
2	Essential and desirable criteria clearly distinguished	☐ ✓	
3	Vacancy advertised in both English and French	☐ ✓	
4	Vacancy distributed through at least 2 channels specifically reaching francophone civil society	☐ ✓	
5	Vacancy notice includes explicit disability-inclusive statement and reasonable adjustment offer	☐ ✓	
6	Selection panel composition meets gender and language diversity requirements	☐ ✓	
7	All panel members have completed unconscious bias training	☐ ✓	
8	Interview questions reviewed to remove stereotyping or discriminatory questions	☐ ✓	
9	Reasonable adjustment requests reviewed and accommodated before any interview	☐ ✓	
10	Recruitment funnel data (applicant / shortlist / interview / appointment diversity) recorded	☐ ✓	
11	Positive action rationale documented where applied	☐ ✓	
12	Unsuccessful candidates notified promptly after appointment confirmed	☐ ✓	
13	Panel scoring records retained in HR file (24 months)	☐ ✓	

Hiring Manager — Signature & Date	Executive Director — Authorised & Date
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Annex C — Pay Equity Analysis Methodology

INSTRUCTIONS

Conducted annually by Finance Manager as part of the budget cycle. Results presented to Executive Director for review. Disclosed in Annual DEI Progress Report. Independent validation recommended every 3 years.

Step 1 — Data Extraction

Extract from payroll system: all staff names (for reference only — not published); grade; current annual salary in USD equivalent; contract type; years of service at RFLD; office location; gender; language group (francophone / anglophone / lusophone — based on first working language at RFLD); and nationality. Data is anonymised before analysis — individuals are replaced with reference codes.

Step 2 — Median and Mean by Group

For each grade level, calculate: (a) median salary for each gender group; (b) mean salary for each gender group; (c) median salary for each language group; (d) mean salary for each language group; and (e) median and mean by nationality cluster where sample size permits meaningful analysis (minimum 3 individuals per cell to protect anonymity).

Step 3 — Control for Legitimate Variables

For gaps exceeding 5% between any two groups at the same grade, control for: years of service within the current grade (using RFLD's salary band progression rules); any specific technical qualification genuinely required for a particular post and not held by members of the other group; and office cost-of-living index where RFLD uses a local salary scale. Document each control applied and its effect on the gap figure.

Step 4 — Calculate the Unexplained Gap

The Pay Gap figure = the gap remaining after controlling for all legitimate variables. This is the figure that represents potential pay inequity. Calculate separately for: gender pay gap; francophone/anglophone pay gap; and nationality cluster pay gap where data permits.

Step 5 — Year-on-Year Comparison

Compare current year figures to prior year for each gap metric. Note whether the trend is improving (gap narrowing), stable, or worsening (gap widening). A worsening trend is a governance flag requiring Board notification.

Step 6 — Remediation Trigger

Gap Level	Threshold	Required Action
No gap	< 5% unexplained	Record result. Continue monitoring. No immediate action.
Attention	5–10% unexplained	Structural cause analysis. Document findings. Prepare remediation plan for next budget cycle.
Action required	10–20% unexplained	Immediate salary uplift in next payroll cycle. Structural cause analysis. Remediation plan with timeline. Board notification.
Urgent	Above 20% unexplained	Immediate Board notification. Emergency salary review within 60 days. External validation of analysis. ED accountability review.

Annex D — Reasonable Adjustment Request Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete and submit to Executive Director via admin@rflgd.org or sealed envelope to any RFLD office marked 'Confidential — Reasonable Adjustment Request.' Response provided within 10 business days. Refusals are provided with a written justification. Decisions may be challenged through the grievance process.

Full Name		Role Title and Grade	
Office / Location		Date of Request	
Request Type	☐ New adjustment request ☐ Review of existing adjustment ☐ Temporary adjustment		

Describe the disability or health condition requiring adjustment (you do not need to provide a diagnosis — describe the functional impact on your work):

Describe the adjustment you are requesting and how it would remove the substantial disadvantage you currently experience:

Have you discussed this informally with your line manager? If yes, what was the response?

Do you have any supporting documentation from a medical professional? (Optional)

I confirm that the information above is accurate. I understand RFLD will treat this request confidentially and respond within 10 business days. I understand that if my request is declined I will receive a written justification and may use the grievance process to challenge the decision.

Staff Member — Signature & Date	ED Decision — Approved / Conditions / Declined (with reasons)

Annex E — Annual DEI Progress Report Template

INSTRUCTIONS

Produced by Executive Director annually. Presented to Board for approval. Published on rflgd.org/rfld-report/. Submitted to Sida and relevant donors as part of GESI compliance reporting.

Reporting Year		Date of Report	
Prepared By		Board Approved	

Part 1 — Workforce Diversity Snapshot

Metric	This Year	Last Year	Change
Total staff headcount (all offices)			
% female staff			
% francophone-first-language staff at Grade 3+			
% staff from Sahel programme countries			
Staff with declared disability (%)			
% under-35 staff overall			

Part 2 — Pay Equity

Pay Gap Metric	This Year	Last Year	Target
Gender pay gap — mean			
Gender pay gap — median			
Francophone/anglophone pay gap — mean			
Unexplained gender pay gap (after controls)			
Unexplained language group pay gap (after controls)			

Part 3 — DEI Action Plan Progress

#	Commitment	Target	Status	Progress Note
1	Action Plan Commitment 1		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
2	Action Plan Commitment 2		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
3	Action Plan Commitment 3		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
4	Action Plan Commitment 4		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
5	Action Plan Commitment 5		☐ On Track ☐	

#	Commitment	Target	Status	Progress Note
			Behind ☐ Complete	
6	Action Plan Commitment 6		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
7	Action Plan Commitment 7		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
8	Action Plan Commitment 8		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
9	Action Plan Commitment 9		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
10	Action Plan Commitment 10		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
11	Action Plan Commitment 11		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
12	Action Plan Commitment 12		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
13	Action Plan Commitment 13		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	
14	Action Plan Commitment 14		☐ On Track ☐ Behind ☐ Complete	

Part 4 — Narrative Assessment

What were the most significant DEI achievements of the year?

Where did RFLD fall short of its DEI commitments — and what were the root causes?

What specific improvements will be made in the coming year, and how will they be resourced?

How has RFLD's programme reach equity changed during the year?

Staff inclusion survey results — key themes (anonymised):

Executive Director — Signature & Date	Board Chair — Approved & Date
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:

Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date: