



CHARKHA – THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION NETWORK

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

1. Introduction

Charkha – The Development Communication Network (hereinafter referred to as 'Charkha') is an innovative non-profit organization that works towards the social and economic inclusion of rural marginalized communities through the creative use of media.

2. Purpose

Charkha is committed to the cause of promoting diversity and inclusion within the organization and in larger communities who we partner with. Our objective is to achieve gender parity across all levels starting from our Board. A diversity policy shall help us define, strategize, plan and implement the essential roadmap, guidance and measurement towards bridging the gaps as we work on different facets that have a bearing on achieving diversity goals. This policy is forward looking and sets a vision for diversity and inclusion for activities across the Charkha organization.

3. Our definition of diversity and inclusion

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences amongst people in an organization. An organization is a collective representation of people coming with individual differences in thoughts, personality, unique capabilities and talent that they bring to work. It is an understanding that each individual is unique, and a recognition of our individual differences, so that each and every one feels important, respected, included and engaged as we assimilate people with differences including but not limited to nationality, geography, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, family status, religious beliefs, perspective, experience or other ideologies. While we strongly appreciate diversity in all forms, achieving gender parity is a priority for us.

Besides, our workforce should reflect the diverse communities we serve. As a non-profit organization, we work in different states of India with a broad array of laws and regulations. But regardless of where we operate, we take care to respect the diversity, talents and abilities of all. We benefit greatly from the skills, experience and commitment of the diverse range of people who work with us.

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. It is the exploration of the differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

4. Objectives and scope of the diversity policy

We are committed to recruiting, retaining and promoting highly talented individuals to further the Group's strategic goals. This includes:-

- Employing best practices in regards to the initiatives of Charkha, benchmarked with national and international donors, organizations with similar objectives of Charkha, reputed companies and institutes contributes to achieve the goals of Charkha;
- Providing an environment of equality and respect for all employees and contractors;
- Not discriminating against any individuals on the basis of their gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family status, religious beliefs and abilities;
- Operating in accordance with all relevant legislation in the jurisdictions we operate in;
- Ensuring fairness and avoiding unlawful discrimination in matters including remuneration, employment terms and conditions, promotions, training and development opportunities;
- Promptly and fairly dealing with complaints of harassment, bullying, or unlawful discrimination by employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders in the course of the Charkha's activities;
- Reviewing the Charkha's employment policies and practices to promote fairness and address gender bias and underlying barriers to achieving gender balance;
- Building leadership capability by providing equal opportunities for training and development of staff, as required, to harness their full potential; and
- Providing equal opportunities for all employees in respect of career progression.

We realize that achieving and sustaining an environment on founding Diversity and Inclusion principles will need a balanced and concerted effort across the organization. In addition, we will need to work with key stakeholders such as communities, governments and donors to further our Diversity & Inclusion agenda. This Policy covers all employees and consultants within and working with Charkha.

5. Charkha's approach to diversity

Charkha's commitment to diversity and inclusion extends to all areas of our work. Promoting diversity and inclusion will need a balanced concerted effort across organization's internal values, processes, policies. The diversity policy shall help us layout guiding principles, strategy and execution plans with defined milestones towards achieving gender parity.

Diversity means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:-

- ✚ Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural Environment;
- ✚ Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own;
- ✚ Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- ✚ Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- ✚ Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

Diversity includes, therefore, knowing how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the organization to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and communities. These include but are not limited to age, ethnicity, class, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, as well as religious status, gender expression, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, and work experiences. Finally, we acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but also can be fluid, we respect individual rights to self-identification, and we recognize that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.

While we recognize and promote diversity in all forms, we are **prioritizing to focus on gender diversity initiatives.**

Charkha going forward intends to continue to strengthen its commitment towards strengthening the vision and strategy for Diversity and Inclusion through the significant involvement of top management and leaders. This is based on extensive use of surveys, analytics and inferences and is an all-encompassing approach to strengthening the vision and strategy elements.

Additionally, we realize the importance of creating an organizational committee to own, implement and measure Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. The committee shall clearly own the overall Diversity and Inclusion agenda with calendared and measurable deliverables.

6. Leadership and accountability

Charkha has the highest level of commitment from Board to individuals in the organization. Each has a unique and valuable role to play in supporting our commitment to diversity. The board sets out the overall diversity agenda. They provide thought leadership on workplace systems, processes, practices and measurements in developing sustainable and inclusive workplace cultures.

At Charkha, Board members and senior leadership walk the talk and lead by example. Accordingly, Board and senior management diversity is of great importance in our overall diversity strategy. Charkha understands and values the benefits that diversity can bring to its Board. When considering new appointments to the Board, the Nominations Committee reviews the balance of skills, experience and diversity on the Board to identify those criteria which are determined to be vital for enhancing the Board's effectiveness. These criteria form the basis of the search for new appointments to the Board. The Nominations Committee ensures inclusion of more female candidates on candidate shortlists, to address the lack of gender diversity on the Board.

The Board places a high emphasis on ensuring the development of diversity in the senior management roles within Charkha and supports and oversees the Charkha's objective of ensuring adequate representation of female executives in Executive Committees and Leadership grades. This objective is monitored by the Board and built into its assessment of executive performance.

Leaders and board members view the accomplishment of Diversity and Inclusion goals and objectives as an important part of their responsibilities. As an organization, we are committed to reinforcing and building leadership capability and commitment through use of best practices. Further, every leader is assessed on Charkha Values at annual performance calibrations and are given feedback on their capabilities including that of Diversity and Inclusion capability. Senior leaders have strong diversity building targets through our recruitment and selection, staff growth programs.

7. Leadership and employees' competence and diversity intelligence

The success of any diversity and inclusion program is crucially dependent on Leaders and Managers who are ultimately responsible for managing teams. We firmly believe that for all Diversity and Inclusion related initiatives to be successful and to see faster and greater benefits, we need to ensure that diverse employees are actively engaged in work environment without any biases. As inclusive leaders, we need to continuously work towards nurturing an environment where diverse employees are nurtured, mentored and coached to develop their potential as future leaders. We constantly introspect to ensure that we are free from any conscious or unconscious biases that guide our opinion, behavior, language, approach, stance and overall demeanor when interacting with people who are diverse in gender, thoughts, orientation, etc.

8. Recruitment Development and Advancement

The success of any Diversity and Inclusion initiative is crucially dependent upon hiring and staffing philosophy. At Charkha, we ensure that Diversity and Inclusion is integrated into recruitment, talent development, advancement, and retention. A conscious effort is made to attract applicants from different diversity dimension groups to achieve and maintain a workforce that shows diversity across levels and functions. Employees are encouraged to consider development opportunities and positions outside their current functional, technical, or professional area.

9. Policies on workplace conduct, benefits, work life and flexibility

Our workplace policies play an important role in reinforcing a culture on founding principles of diversity and inclusion. Policies have a strong underpinning on the way we work and approach our lives. Our policies around work-life integration are framed after extensive deliberations with impacted communities and individuals. Some of our policies are:-

(a) Equal Employment Opportunity Policy: To achieve our organizational objectives, we are committed to a merit based appointment process. We have policies and practices in place that enable capable and diverse employees access to all opportunities available with the organization, in a fair and equitable manner. We have the best in class tools and practices to ensure that we can access the broadest pool of diverse candidates, in keeping with our commitment to merit base deployment.

(b) Code of Conduct Policy: The organization is committed to eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimization of persons at workplace. Our Code of Conduct policy supports our commitment to maintain a workplace where all staff can work without fear of unacceptable workplace conduct impacting them. Every year employees have to give a personal undertaking in terms of having read and signed the Code of Conduct policy. Every employee of the company has to undertake mandatory Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) training.

(c) Statement of Professional Practice: Our profession is founded on very high standards of personal integrity and conduct, which requires absolute honesty.

(d) Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures: The health and safety of our people, visitors, consultants and customers are essential to our long run success. We are committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace.

(e) Leave policies: We at Charkha believe that our people have changing needs during different life and career stages. A range of leave options are available to employees to help them manage those changes. As an organization we have the best in class practices in respect of maternity, paternity and adoption related leave and compensation policies, besides options for parental leave, career break (sabbatical) to fulfill the needs of diverse employees in our organization.

Going forward, we shall progressively evaluate the possibility of adopting **best practices** as Charkha back to work program for women who may have taken a break on account of personal commitments.

- **The Internship Experience Program:** This internship program focuses on giving students and interns a memorable experience. The mission being, to build the next generation of Charkha.
- **Social media leverage policy:** Messaging on website and Social Media inviting Women at all levels / different generations / People with Disabilities and other diverse groups.

10. Job design, classification and compensation

At Charkha, we take utmost care in ensuring that job design and classification are unbiased and compensation is equitable. The organization systematically reviews job requirements, classifications, and compensation. Job descriptions and requirements are clear and do not include non-job-related factors. The organization designs jobs to accommodate as much as possible, individual needs as well as organizational needs. Remuneration is based on merit, performance and market data.

11.External Partnerships

We care passionately about the well-being of our employees and, equally, the communities in which we operate.

A key part of our work in this area is to empower women the best possible start in life. We are continuously contributing to the development of the country by working in different states of India to achieve the goal.

Charkha would like to adopt a larger volunteering program for its employees to participate in activities essentially to make larger societal impact in the communities that we work for.

12.Assessment, Communication and Sustainability

The larger roadmap towards creating and sustaining sustainable diversity and inclusion model has to begin with an internal survey with larger employee base. This is to assess the perspectives prevailing in our organization in terms of where we stand in regards to other organizations which are known for their diversity and inclusion culture and ethos. We will need to create the right emotional energy in the organization so that each one of us is passionate about promoting the diversity and inclusion agenda in our own individual spheres of influence. Education, communication, connects, and consistent survey to benchmark our progress will be key to defining sustainability in our efforts. Charkha through its Diversity and Inclusion Committee will help establish the roadmap and co-opt the larger pool of employees, managers and leaders in the quest towards achieving gender parity.

Amongst best practices, there are immense opportunities towards creating a dedicated **mentorship model** to anchor female leaders. Active networking through common interest among Charkha's Women employees is highly recommended to promote and leverage, going forward as one of the plausible action points.

13.Measurement and Impact

The diversity and inclusion initiatives need to be measured year on year. Each year the Board and Diversity and Inclusion Committee will establish objectives for achieving gender diversity, and any other aspect of diversity nominated by the Board and Committee.

The following gender diversity objectives have also been set for the organization and progress will be monitored and reported on each year.

- Percentage of women in senior management
- Percentage of women recruited during the year
- Percentage of total full time female employees across the organization

14.Policy Enforcement

(a) Monitoring

All employees are expected to be aware of Charkha's policies around diversity and share the responsibility of upholding the policies. All employees undergo diversity training.

Diversity training encompasses raising awareness about issues surrounding diversity and developing diversity management skills. If an employee notes that a section of the policy is not being upheld they should bring it to the attention of one of the members of the diversity committee.

(b) Enforcement

Issues and non-compliance will be brought to the attention of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and dealt with on a case by case basis by members of the committee and individuals involved in the incident or non-compliance.

15.Review

The diversity and inclusion committee will review the diversity policy with the Governing Board or the management on an annual basis.

16.Communication Policy

All new employees will be given a copy of this policy upon commencement of employment. Updates will also be distributed annually if changes are made to the policy during the yearly review. The policy will be posted, along with the names and contact information for members of the diversity and inclusion committee on notice boards.