

Gender Policy & Framework

Forest Peoples Programme



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Purpose:

This policy and framework outlines how FPP addresses sex and gender equality and integrates gender equity in our work. It is intended to inform partners, allies and others how we understand and engage with gender in advancing, securing and promoting the human rights of indigenous and forest peoples. The policy details how we seek to understand gender roles, and realities shaped by gender, in the context of collective land and tenure rights as well as how we seek to address their impacts.

This policy and framework represent the organisation’s commitment to gender equality. They have been written to guide staff in its efforts to incorporate and promote gender equality within its organisational culture and programmatic operations.

This is not intended to be a practical guide to the implementation of our work, but rather a statement of principles. It is complemented by internal guidance, tools and practical lessons-learnt which inform the shared community of practice at the Forest Peoples Programme.

Gender Framework

Preamble:

We at FPP are passionate about working in solidarity with indigenous and forests peoples. We support our partners in creating space – otherwise often blocked by forces

within prevailing governments and dominant societies – in which to exercise their right to self-determination, to express their voices and be heard on matters that concern them. Understanding and acting on the gender dimensions of our mission of supporting the self-determination of peoples is critical to ensuring inclusive and sustained realisation of self-determination.

As a human rights organisation, FPP is committed to pro-actively learning about, and respecting, the contexts, cultures, and social systems we work within, as well as striving to ensure accessibility, inclusiveness and non-discrimination in all of our operations. Our commitment to gender justice and non-discriminatory practices on the basis of sex and gender is informed by, and in keeping with, international human rights laws and standards, on the basis that human rights are indivisible. In our work we reference in particular the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).¹ We are guided by statements made by indigenous women’s groups, including the *Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women (1995)*.²

Through this policy, we express our commitment to upholding the fundamental human rights principle of non-discrimination and gender equity in all our work, to ensure: “that human rights are exercised without discrimination of any kind based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status such as disability, age, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, health status, place of residence, economic and social situation.”³

Scope of this framework:

“Gender is a key determinant of who does what, who has what, who decides and who has power.”⁴

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles of and relations between men and women, which are not fixed by biological differences based on sex. Gender roles and relations are not static; such roles and relationships can and do change in response to evolving circumstances, needs and opportunities. Although many societies prescribe a gender binary based on biological sex, gender identity is situated on a spectrum and can have diverse expression.

We recognise that indigenous and forest peoples, and their communities, may be impacted by many different forms of discrimination, including on the basis of race and

¹ CEDAW defines sex discrimination as “[A]ny distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

² Available at http://www.ipcb.org/resolutions/htmls/dec_beijing.html

³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 20, Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights; 2009.

⁴ UNICEF, Promoting Gender Equality: An Equity-Focused Approach to Programming, Operational Guidance Review

indigenous identity. Therefore, in addressing sex and gender discrimination we apply an intersectional approach to understand how these different forms of discrimination impact indigenous peoples and other forest peoples independently and in concert. This policy however primarily addresses sex and gender discrimination, as well as our commitments to advancing gender justice and the inclusive exercise of self-determination.

Our Approach:

“NGOs that work with Indigenous women [must] be guided by principles of mutual respect and promote the full participation of Indigenous women in action and in articulating issues regarding Indigenous women and Indigenous peoples.”

~ Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women (1995)

Para. 46

Within indigenous and forest communities, as with any group of people, there can be differing experiences, interests, perspectives, priorities, needs and concerns including between women and men, girls and boys. As such, we cannot seek to support self-determination for a community if we are not working to involve all the constituent elements of that community. At FPP we work in solidarity with our partners towards understanding and advancing gender-inclusive self-determination, as part of realising the individual and collective rights of indigenous and forest peoples.

In order to achieve sustained change, we must seek respectful partnerships with the communities, peoples and organisations with whom we work. This means that we are committed to long-term engagement with our partners, and to taking the time needed to develop trusted relationships and shared understandings of the varying and complex contexts in which we work. In the context of seeking gender justice, this also requires FPP to conduct prior and - given that gender roles and identities are not static - continuous gendered analysis of each of these contexts.

FPP recognises that concepts of gender influence the structure of human societies, communities and peoples. While many issues confronting indigenous and forest peoples affect them collectively, as recognised in the UNDRIP, some issues may impact different parts of the community in distinct ways and impacts may be felt differently by men and boys, and by women and girls. Moreover, sometimes these differential impacts may be amplified by internal dynamics of gender marginalisation within communities. Thus, the gendered aspects of rights violations must be considered, acknowledged and combatted.

We recognise that the lived experiences of people, including gender roles and realities, give a richness and complexity to the way human societies are organised and are evolving. Diversity in how gender identities are realised and expressed and the nature of gender roles, between and across cultures, contributes to the wealth of humanity and gendered roles may not, in and of themselves, be harmful, discriminatory or unjust. However, in many societies around the world, gender norms frequently favour men and

boys. Where men and male roles are prioritised, women are more often marginalised from power, sometimes in ways that are difficult to perceive. Indigenous women often face discriminatory actions based both on their identities as women and their identities as members of indigenous communities, further compounding their exclusion from participation and authority. Cultural norms and practices may result in women's concerns and rights violations remaining unspoken and unaddressed and FPP recognises the need to pay particular attention to the situation of women and girls.

We note that the legal and policy framework of the State often creates the conditions for marginalisation and disempowerment of indigenous and forest peoples, including by alienating the land and resources on which they depend, as well as for the marginalisation and disempowerment of women (frequently through discriminatory laws). Although we acknowledge the primary duty of the state to protect, respect and advance human rights, we seek to advance gender equity and principles of non-discrimination regardless of whether discriminatory distinctions, exclusions or restrictions are made by public and/or private actors.

Finally, in order to do our work responsibly, FPP recognises that we must continually inquire into and reflect on both the different forces that keep indigenous and forest peoples – and individuals – oppressed, and on the complex nature of self-determination. FPP is committed to continually adjusting and improving our ways of working to ensure that in our overall goal of seeking political space for indigenous and forest peoples to secure their rights, control their lands and decide their own futures, we seek to consider equally the interests and needs of all sections of the community and peoples.

Gender Policy

Our Guiding Principles and Commitments:

These commitments are intended to improve the explicit incorporation of gender in programmatic and organisational practices.

1. FPP acts in solidarity with indigenous and forest peoples in advancing the exercise of self-determination
 - a. We commit to working towards gender justice as an integral element of inclusive self-determination
2. FPP applies our understanding of gender in the context of collective land and tenure rights, including the wider framework of indigenous peoples' collective and individual human rights.
 - a. We commit to continuous and sensitive reflection by staff on the way in which gender dynamics affect the enjoyment of rights, including collective land rights, by all members of the community in the countries in which we work, and to action in our work to support marginalised gender groups within communities or peoples to participate fully in self-determination.
 - b. We commit to undertaking continuous gender analysis of the countries in which we work, and with the communities with whom we work.
3. FPP recognises that indigenous women and girls are the source of the greatest knowledge about the constraints and realities of their lives.
 - a. We commit to seeking guidance from indigenous women when seeking gender justice.
4. FPP is guided by international human rights law, standards and norms, and upholds non-discrimination as a fundamental international legal principle.
 - a. We commit to provide training and learning for staff and partners on the content of international human rights law, including norms and standards related to gender and non-discrimination.
5. FPP recognises that external threats and pressures can impact different parts of the community differently and that internal marginalization can further exacerbate this.
 - a. We commit to considering and analysing together with communities and peoples with whom we work, how external threats and pressures might affect different groups in different ways, as well as supporting community development of strategies to address these differential impacts.
 - b. We commit to mainstreaming gender into all aspects of our work.

6. FPP recognises that the lived experiences of people, including gender roles and realities, give a richness and complexity to the way human societies are organised and are evolving.
 - a. We commit to respecting cultural difference and recognising that not all difference is discriminatory.
7. FPP recognises that often gender norms favour men and boys over women and girls, including in some customary systems, and therefore we need to pay particular attention to the situation of women and girls.
 - a. We commit to ensuring that our programmes and ways of working will support women and girls in indigenous and forest communities.
8. FPP recognises the intersectionality of discrimination faced by people we work with, which may include discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, class, sexual orientation etc. or the combination of any number of these factors.
 - a. We commit to acknowledging intersectional discrimination, listening to who face it, respecting their suggestions for how to address it, seeking ways to facilitate their participation, and providing additional support where necessary to enable it.
9. FPP acknowledges that gender roles and relations are not fixed, such roles and relationships can and do change in response to evolving circumstances, needs and opportunities.
 - a. We commit to supporting community-led evolution of gender roles in a way that contributes to the advancement of inclusive self-determination.
 - b. We commit to ensuring our work on gender is continually self-reflective and nuanced and thus frequently interrogated and improved.
10. FPP recognises the roles and distinct responsibilities of non-State actors in relation to gender non-discrimination (as an element of human rights), while accepting the primary role of the State in respecting, protecting and fulfilling these rights
 - a. We commit to assisting and supporting communities and peoples with whom we work to hold States and non-State actors to account in relation to actions, omissions, projects, laws, policies and other measures which entrench or facilitate gender injustice or contribute to marginalisation of gender groups within indigenous and forest peoples and communities.
11. In terms of accountability FPP commits to:
 - a. We will monitor, evaluate and institutionalise organisational learning regarding specific gender equality results.
 - b. We will ensure that key organisational policies, systems and practices including but not limited to budgeting, human resource recruitment, training and management, and decision making support women's rights and gender equality.

Implementation and Monitoring:

- Build a common understanding of gender through induction and training and ensure that all training across the organization is gender-sensitive.
- The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and incorporates ongoing debate on gender equality and women's rights.
- The Gender Group will support development of action plans and reviews of progress.
- FPP will write periodic reports for trustees on the progress of its efforts in making its internal operations more gender sensitive and in incorporating gender in its programmatic work.

Glossary:

Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles of and relations between men and women, which are not fixed by biological differences based on sex. Gender roles and relations are not fixed, such roles and relationships can and do change in response to evolving circumstances, needs and opportunities. Although many societies prescribe a gender binary based on biological sex, gender identity is situated on a spectrum and is not limited to two possibilities. “Gender is a key determinant of who does what, who has what, who decides and who has power.”⁵

Gender Equity

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women, men and people with other gender identities. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent all genders from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender Equality

Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by all genders of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards.

Gender Justice

Gender justice refers to the just and fair treatment of individuals with different gender roles and identities, allowing for diversity in preferences. Gender justice requires the overcoming of socially ingrained gender inequalities which prevent the full experience of rights by some people.

Sex discrimination

Sex discrimination is “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of (biological) sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise... of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”⁶

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is the exclusion or restriction of a person of a certain gender based on the idea that people of different gender identities are inferior. Conceptions of gender roles and relations are the basis for structural inequalities and injustices within and across societies and therefore gender discrimination can impact all parts of daily life. This can impact on their identities and self-worth, their agency and voice, their choices and opportunities and over-all well-being.

⁵ UNICEF, Promoting Gender Equality: An Equity-Focused Approach to Programming, Operational Guidance Review

⁶ CEDAW