

**Gender Equality Policy  
FPA Sri Lanka**

## GENDER EQUALITY

### Introduction

FPA Sri Lanka is committed to a human rights framework which prohibits any discrimination, exclusion or restriction on the basis of sex, age, gender, gender Identity, sexual orientation, marital status, physical and mental disability or health status.<sup>i</sup> Gender equality is a human right. It is especially important for a rights-based, gender transformative organization like FPA Sri Lanka to ensure that the needs, rights and experiences of individuals involved with FPA Sri Lanka (whether as staff, volunteers or clients) are reflected in policies and processes, and that they are supported to play an equal role at FPA Sri Lanka.

### Mandate

This policy provides a set of guiding principles that reflect FPA Sri Lanka's commitment to advancing gender equality and the actions necessary to realize the goal. Gender inequality has been globally recognized as a root cause and consequence of poverty and exclusion. Gender equality mandates have emanated from core international human rights instruments in which IPPF's Declaration of Sexual Rights is grounded.<sup>ii</sup>

FPA Sri Lanka believes gender equality to be inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. Throughout the policy, with exceptions where genders are significantly affected by particular issues, the term 'individuals' is used inclusively to cover women, men, intersex and transgender individuals of all ages regardless of their gender identities. This policy focuses on promoting gender equality, which is broader than equality between women and men and sets out specific and targeted actions required to ensure that **all individuals, who identify as women, men, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex, have access to equality of outcome in the workplace and in programmes.** The policy engages with the impact of social roles and norms, constructs of masculinity and femininity, and discrimination based on gender, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>iii</sup> Definitions of key terms are provided in Appendix 1.

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<sup>i</sup> IPPF Sexual Rights Declaration, 2008, Principle 3, 'Non-discrimination underlies all human rights protection and promotion'.

<sup>ii</sup> These instruments include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW); the Cairo Program of Action (1994), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000) identified gender equality and women's empowerment as a goal and as a basis for achieving all the other goals.

<sup>iii</sup> United Nations Resolution on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Human Rights Council adopted resolution 17/19 ([A/HRC/RES/17/19](#)), July, 2011 'Expressing grave concern at acts of violence and discrimination, in all regions of the world, committed against individuals because of their sexual orientation and gender identity'

As the role of this policy is to achieve gender equality for all, it focuses on those social norms that impact on an individual's ability to participate equally and freely in society, to achieve their full potential. Gender norms and patriarchal structures are pervasive and affect women disproportionately. Women and girls have lower status, fewer opportunities and less access to power than men and boys. Therefore progress towards gender equality requires transformative complementary actions to promote women's rights and empowerment, including addressing gender gaps, unequal policies and discrimination that have historically disadvantaged women and girls and affected their full participation in development. Gender norms also reinforce constructs of masculinity and femininity that have a disproportionate impact on individuals whose sexual orientation and gender identity do not conform to these rigid constructs.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. This policy reflects the FPA Sri Lanka's commitment to human rights and to women's and girls' empowerment. FPA believes that the equitable participation of women and girls from all socio-economic groups in all aspects of FPA's work will empower them in their diverse identities and enable them to acquire the relevant skills and confidence to promote their Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights. This policy also reflects the importance that FPA places on actively supporting women and girls (Staff, volunteers and beneficiaries) to become leaders and to participate on an equal basis with men in every area of FPA's work.
2. Gender should be mainstreamed in all policies, programmes and structures of FPA Sri Lanka.<sup>iv</sup> Women and men have different needs and experiences, as well as different sexual health risks. Gender disparities often serve as additional social, economic and bureaucratic barriers to how individuals promote and protect their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Individual employees also have different needs and experiences related to gender and experience gender-based discrimination in a variety of forms. Policies, programmes and services must seek to be transformative in addressing these gender specific differences and the underlying structural inequalities that sustain them. Enabling environments must be created for everyone to be able to influence and benefit from policies, programmes and services.
3. Gender equality should be applied to all aspects of work at FPA Sri Lanka, whether with regard to representation on a board or committee, or with regard to the social division of labour. In an area such as sexual and reproductive health, in which women bear the largest share of the costs, dangers and burdens (physical, mental, social and economic), it is equitable and fair that women should have at least an equal share in all institutional decision-making processes.

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<sup>iv</sup> Supporting policies which complement and enhance implementation of the current policy can include the policy on Women and Family Planning; Men and Sexual and Reproductive Health; Monitoring and Evaluation; Protecting Children and Young people; Reproductive Health. A policy on Sexual orientation and Gender Identity should be developed to highlight specific issues and how they can be implemented.

4. Gender equality is achieved when all individuals, regardless of their gender identity are equal in every aspect of their lives. It does not imply that they are all the same, but that they have equal value, and that they should be treated in a way that ensures equal outcomes, not just equal opportunities. Where individuals have unequal status and unequal access to knowledge or resources in a community, special measures and affirmative action are needed to address these gender inequalities.
5. This policy reflects the importance that FPA Sri Lanka attaches to workplace safety and its integral link to physical and mental well-being. FPA has a duty of care to ensure that individuals are free from all forms of sexual and gender based harassment and violence in the workplace and when travelling away from their workplace.
6. FPA Sri Lanka believes that promoting gender equality requires working with all gender identities. FPA as an organization recognizes and promotes the crucial role of men and boys as partners in ensuring women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and to addressing underlying power and gender inequalities, including in the service delivery and employment contexts.
7. FPA Sri Lanka recognizes gender diversity and is committed to working with all people to realize a world where they can enjoy their sexuality without fear, stigma or discrimination. This applies to gender identity and sexual orientation, both within the organisation and in the organisation's external facing roles.

### **Implementation**

8. FPA Sri Lanka National Council should use all available mechanisms available to periodically and consistently monitor implementation of the Gender Equality Policy. The implementation of this policy should be adequately resourced and supported by the Senior Management Team.

### **Programme Delivery**

9. To put this policy into action, the FPA Sri Lanka National Council and the Senior Management Team will undertake actions that transform relationships of power. These transformative actions could include, promoting programmes that empower individuals (especially those individuals who are marginalized on the basis of their sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity) and making efforts to advance their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
10. Gender analysis (based on age and sex disaggregated data) should be undertaken, throughout the programme cycle and by:
  - a. making every effort to implement programmes that lead to empowerment, including into leadership positions, in particular for those who are poor and marginalized;
  - b. ensuring availability of services that actively address unique gender needs across the lifecycle;

- c. engaging all, including men and boys, in sexual and reproductive health efforts and as allies in reducing gender inequality;
- d. preventing, mitigating and responding to sexual and gender based violence including intimate partner violence and sexual violence in humanitarian emergencies, and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- e. tackling social norms that hinder meaningful participation on an equal basis, including but not exclusively: son preference; early and forced marriage; intimate partner and domestic violence; and, female genital mutilation (FGM);
- f. creating and/or strengthening gender equality concerns and perspectives with partners; strengthening FPA Sri Lanka's identity as a gender expert; linking with those who work to promote women's rights and sexual rights and engaging LGBTI and men's organizations for gender equality, including in service delivery, programming and advocacy;
- g. undertaking analysis of gender disaggregated roles and work patterns taking women's work load and care work into consideration;
- h. responding to the needs of most at risk groups, specifically: those with disabilities; sex workers; intersex and transgender individuals; those who use drugs; those in institutions; and, those trafficked for sex;
- i. abolishing internal policies relating to spousal/ partner consent for access to services (e.g. for using family planning and/or emergency obstetric care);
- j. building staff capacity on gender perspectives and the effect of gender inequality on individual's access to services and human rights, including perspectives on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- k. making deliberate and focused efforts to promote meaningful participation in the programme cycle, including for adolescent girls.

### **Governance**

11. To operationalize this policy, the FPA Sri Lanka National Council will practice affirmative action in order to alter the balance in the numbers of men and women at all levels of decision-making in volunteer bodies of FPA, in favour of gender parity, taking into consideration women and individuals who are marginalized on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including on: (Annexure 11)
  - a. The National Council;
  - b. Technical Committees – Medical, IEC, Finance and Administration, Youth and SMP
  - c. FPA Audit Committee
12. Operationalizing affirmative action would include:
  - a. making additional efforts to recruit and promote women candidates when posts come up for election;

- b. giving preference to eligible women where there is a choice of candidates;
- c. sending more than one representative to a regional or international body (where MAs are permitted to do so) to ensure equal representation.

### **Recruitment and Promotion**

13. To operationalize this policy, FPA Sri Lanka will integrate affirmative action in employment policy (while respecting national legislation) to ensure gender parity, particularly in decision making positions, at all levels. Operationalizing affirmative action in employment would include: (Annexure 111)

- a. active recruitment to high-level decision-making and high-salaried posts, as well as other posts with the objective of achieving at least 50 per cent representation by women in all posts at all levels;
- b. recruitment and promotion of young women;
- c. recruitment and promotion of staff from diverse backgrounds, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity;
- d. ensuring all recruitment panels have gender expertise.

### **Mainstreaming in the workplace**

14. To ensure gender equality in the workplace and the effective implementation of this policy, related policies will be audited to ensure compliance (while respecting national legislation). This should include, inter alia:

- a. ensuring equitable representation and participation in senior management and relevant decision making committees;
- b. ensuring equal opportunities for personal development, in training, working conditions and promotion benefits, and reviewing up-take in these opportunities by gender;
- c. providing an enabling work environment so as to ensure the meaningful participation and a work/life balance for working parents – this includes, but is not limited to: providing flexible working hours; developing home-working policies; and, providing child care centres or child care subsidies.
- d. ensuring equal pay and reward structures for all employees. This requires every part of the organisation to conduct equal pay reviews to identify any imbalances and implement strategies to address them;
- e. providing maternity and paternity leave (for both adoptive and biological parenthood) and extending it to all staff regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital/relationship status;
- f. reviewing and taking steps to address gender imbalance where it exists within the organisation structure with the aim of attaining at least 50 per cent representation by women;
- g. identifying trained staff to act as dedicated gender focal point(s) with consistent and structured support from senior management;
- h. identifying a senior staff member at the managerial level within FPA Sri Lanka to act as a gender champion;

- i. undertaking refresher training for all staff, to enhance understanding and ensuring that gender perspectives are integral to new staff induction processes;
- j. ensuring that staff's access to and use of information technology is gender equitable;
- k. developing organisation wide standards on confidentiality that specifically refer to the situations of gender identity and sexual orientation.

### **Work place safety**

15. Providing a safe and secure environment, for all staff to be free from sexual harassment and physical, sexual and psychological violence, including homophobia. (Annexure 1V) This will require:

- a. Developing and implementing policies on sexual and gender based violence, including violence against women that specifically consider the needs of the staff members experiencing harassment and violence (whether inside or outside the workplace). This should include: taking time off work for medical, psychosocial support, and social benefits appointments; confidentiality; and security while at work.
- b. Extending work-related considerations as the situation requires, including secure transport facilities for staff who work late hours and ensuring security measures along with minimum basic facilities for individuals travelling in the field and individuals at personal risk on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation or gender identity;

16. Gender should be mainstreamed into all FPA Sri Lanka programmes, budgets, strategic plans and policies and should be systematically monitored and evaluated at all levels at FPA on a continuous basis.

### **Gender Audit**

17. Recognizing existing gaps and challenges in pursuit of FPA's commitment to achieve gender equality in all aspects of its work, responsibility for implementation and oversight of this policy will include the following:
- a. the implementation and reporting of progress will be the responsibility of staff at FPA;
  - b. the monitoring and oversight of implementation and progress and accountability for lack of progress is the responsibility of the FPA Sri Lanka National Council;
  - c. gender audits should be conducted at all levels to establish baseline information and set targets that should be achieved in a defined period of time. The gender audit should assess: programme delivery; governance; recruitment; mainstreaming in the work place; sex disaggregated numbers of volunteers and employees; positions disaggregated by sex and salary; leave practices; work place safety practices, etc. Progress reports should be compared to baseline and shared within the relevant part of the organization and support learning across the Association;
  - d. monitoring the gender balance across the Association every three years to determine the Association's gender representation at

every level - National Council, Senior Management Team, Technical Advisory Committee, Welfare Society and within the staff.

## Appendix 1

### Glossary of terms

**Gender** refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context.<sup>v</sup>

**Gender audit** refers to assessments of organizational performance on the promotion of gender equality, in order to instigate gender-related analysis and activity in organizations and programmes; monitor implementation of gender equality policy commitments; translating them into action and impact; documenting and disseminating good practice.<sup>vi</sup>

**Gender based violence** (GBV) is violence and discrimination that is directed at a person on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. SGBV underlies the inequitable power relationships between women and men and affects women disproportionately but also affects men and boys to some extent. GBV is often used interchangeably with violence against women (VAW).<sup>vii</sup> SGBV includes violence and discrimination experienced by individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>viii</sup> GBV is both a violation of human rights and a key barrier to sexual and reproductive health services

**Gender equality** means equality of opportunity for women, men, intersex and transgender people to realize their full rights and potential. It signifies an aspiration to transform structural inequalities, behaviour patterns and social

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women-

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/storage/dfid-gender-manual-2008.pdf> ,The Gender Manual: A Practical Guide, 2008

<sup>vii</sup> UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993 uses GBV to definition violence against women in part, as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (Article 1).’

<sup>viii</sup> UN Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, which brought a focus on human rights violations based on SOGI, particularly violence and discrimination.



norms, leading to social change and sustainable development. Gender equality requires specific strategies aimed at eliminating gender inequities.

**Gender equity** means justice and fairness. It is the process and gender equality is the result of that process. Gender equity recognizes that women, men, intersex and transgender individuals have different needs and historical and social disadvantages that hinder them from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

**Gender identity** refers to an individual's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. It includes both the personal sense of the body, which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical, or other means, and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech, and mannerisms.<sup>ix</sup> The gender identity of intersex and transgender individuals does not always match the sex assigned to them at birth. Transgender individuals generally choose to dress and present themselves as the gender with which they identify, rather than their birth-assigned sex. They may or may not choose to alter their body physically through hormones or surgery. Intersex and transgender people should be treated as the gender with which they identify, and referred to by their chosen name and pronoun.

**Gender mainstreaming** is the process of incorporating a gender perspective into policies, strategies, programs, project activities, and administrative functions, as well as into the institutional culture of an organization.<sup>x</sup>

**Gender transformative** policies and programmes aim to change gender norms and promote relationships that are fair and just. Gender-transformative programming aims to build equitable social norms and structures; advance individual gender-equitable behaviour; transform gender roles; create more gender equitable relationships; advocate for policy and legislative change to support equitable social systems.<sup>xi</sup>

**Intersex** refers to people whose biological makeup (genetic, hormonal and physical features) are neither exclusively male nor exclusively female, but are typically both at once or not clearly defined as either. These features can manifest themselves in secondary sexual characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breasts and stature; primary sexual characteristics such as reproductive organs and genitalia; and/or in chromosomal structures and hormones.<sup>xii</sup>

**Transgender** is an umbrella term referring to individuals whose gender identity and expression does not conform to norms and expectations traditionally associated with their sex assigned at birth. Transgender individuals may self-

<sup>ix</sup> UNAIDS, Terminology Guidelines, October 2012,

<sup>x</sup> Inter-agency gender working group, <http://www.igwg.org/Articles/whatisgenderjanuary2012.aspx>

<sup>xi</sup> IPPF, 'The Truth about Men and Boys: Gender Transformative Policies and Programmes', June 2009

<sup>xii</sup> IPPF,

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/trans\\_and\\_intersex\\_people\\_web3\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/trans_and_intersex_people_web3_en.pdf),

identify as transgender, female, male, transwoman or transman, transsexual, hijra, kathoey, waria or one of many other transgender identities, and may express their genders in a variety of masculine, feminine and/or androgynous ways.<sup>xiii</sup>

**Sex** refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Sex differences are concerned with males' and females' physiology. While these sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as there are individuals who possess both, they tend to differentiate humans as males and females.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Sexual orientation** refers to each person's capacity for emotional, physical and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different sex (heterosexual) or the same sex (homosexual) or more than one sex (bisexual).

**Sexual violence** is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. A wider range of sexually violent acts can take place in different circumstances and settings.<sup>xv</sup>

*As adopted by National Council, 2016*

<sup>xiii</sup> IPPF, [http://srhivlinkages.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/web\\_whatworks\\_india\\_en.pdf](http://srhivlinkages.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/web_whatworks_india_en.pdf)

<sup>xiv</sup> WHO, Defining Sexual Health, [http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual\\_health/sh\\_definitions/en/](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual_health/sh_definitions/en/)

<sup>xv</sup> WHO, ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies, 2007

**Annexure 11:**

**Articles of Association of the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka**

5.

(c) To advocate for the basic human right of all women, men and young people to make free and informed choices regarding their own sexual and reproductive health and for the means to exercise this right;

(e) To facilitate access either by direct provision or referral to sexual and reproductive health information, education, services and training regardless of age, sex, marital status, ability to pay, ethnic origin, political and other factors that could make an individual the object of discrimination;

14.

(c) The Association shall not discriminate on grounds of race, creed, ethnic origin, marital status, political belief, gender, disability, sexual orientation or age in;

1. Admitting members
2. Providing information
3. Recruiting staff or
4. In any other aspect of the Association's work

(j) The elected National Council of the Association should be made up of at least Fifty percent (50%) of women

37.

(b) At least Fifty Percent (50%) of the members of the National Council shall be women and the National Council shall consider Twenty percent (20%) of its members to be youth members

**Annexure 111:**

**Human Resource Policies & Procedures Manual**

**4. Policies on Equal Opportunities**

(a) To provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals without discrimination on the basis of gender, age, ethnic group, disability, health status, religion, marital status, or sexual orientation in accordance with applicable local, state and national laws and regulations

(b) To ensure that employment, promotion and/or salary increments decisions will be based solely upon individuals' qualifications, experience, and demonstrated capacity to perform at higher or improved levels, and not on favoritism or nepotism

(c) The Executive Director may at his/her discretion, grant employment to individuals solely on the basis of any characteristics mentioned in Objective (a), to create an organizational balance and/ or strategic or operational requirement

(d) To adhere to Principle 7 of the IPPF Accreditation standards

(e) To ensure that FPA Sri Lanka provides reasonable job accommodation for persons with disabilities, who can perform the essential functions for which they are qualified and that the Equal Employment process is reflected throughout FPA Sri Lanka's staff recruitment & retention processes and procedures

#### **4.1. Gender**

The Policy is to ensure that FPA Sri Lanka takes positive actions to improve the opportunities given to women in terms of careers growth, recognition, providing a harassment free working environment, and promote gender equality. FPA Sri Lanka believes that;

1. Women should have the same opportunities, benefits, rights, entitlements, dignity and respect given to men in terms of their career at FPA
2. The capabilities of women will be recognized as being equal to men
3. Gender should be balanced in teams especially at managerial level
4. The working culture of the organization should be conducive to the empowerment of female team members
5. Proper care and security is provided to female staff travelling & accommodation
6. Granting of certain special arrangements such as paid or half pay or no pay leave, flexi time to care for their dependent children to ensure that women can continue their careers even after live childbirth/s

#### **Annexure 1V**

#### **4.2 Harassment**

FPA Sri Lanka is committed to ensuring that employees are treated fairly and equitably in an environment free of intimidation and harassment. Harassment is an unacceptable and unlawful form of behavior which will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

All complaints of harassment will be treated seriously and promptly, with due regard to confidentiality and disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who has been found guilty of breaching this policy.

FPA Sri Lanka recognizes that harassments may be of two categories;

1. Hostile work environment harassment
2. Sexual harassment

#### **4.2.2. Sexual Harassment**

1. Sexual Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behavior of a sexual nature which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended
2. Sexual Harassment can take many forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, the displaying of offensive material or other behavior which creates a sexually tense or hostile working environment
3. Sexual Harassment can occur between an employee and a co-worker, supervisor, manager, agent, consultant or contractor

4. Sexual Harassment is not just unlawful during working hours or in the workplace itself. The behavior is unlawful in any work related context, including conferences, work functions, business or field trips and interactions with clients.