



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF ASIA SOLIDARITY FUND

GENDER POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

The IPAS Fund upholds the principle of gender equality in general and the rights of women in particular, as affirmed and protected by international human rights instruments which declares that women and girls' rights are human rights and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex and gender must be eradicated everywhere. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) stresses the responsibility of States to *"take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination."*

The IPAS Fund is, thereby, committed to advance this provision as part of its core advocacy, and to ensure that gender equality and equity is integral in its internal processes, decision making systems and practices, and in the implementation of its programs. Relatedly, IPAS will ensure that the programs, projects and initiatives it will support will advance the goals of gender equality and equity, and indigenous women's empowerment and that the implementing partners integrate these two goals into their work.

This Gender Policy aims to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are ethical and political principles that shall guide the IPAS in its governance and programs implementation and monitoring mechanisms as well as the general work culture.

This Policy intends to help create an enabling environment that will promote gender-sensitive attitudes, behaviours, and practices of the leadership and management of the IPAS Fund, and thus, model for its implementing partners in particular and the community in general.



This Gender Policy consists of basic principles and operational guidelines to be carried out by the IPAS Fund Governing Structure and staff members.

This IPAS Fund Gender Policy aims to:

- **BUILD** gender awareness and capacity of the IPAS Fund governance and secretariat on promoting and monitoring gender equality.
- **INTEGRATE** gender in planning, management and working systems and practices of the IPAS Fund structures and mechanisms.
- **ENSURE** gender balance and equal opportunities in human resources systems and processes on selection, recruitment, employment and professional development

Due diligence shall be exercised in vetting proposals for funding assistance from IPAS Fund to ensure that assistance does not disrupt relationships within households and communities, but instead promotes both gender equality and equity, and women's empowerment. The IPAS Fund will ensure that its activities that are related and impact on gender will do no harm. The specific attention will be paid to how programs may unintentionally create or exacerbate gender inequalities. Also, the current and potential risks will be identified and be mitigated by maintaining a flexible approach and by ensuring the provision of gender expertise to implementing partners.

However, it must be recognised that gender mainstreaming can also encounter challenges due to the changes required at both the individual and collective organisational levels. Generally, gender equality objectives are long-term aims for transformation as it also requires the wider society to be transformed.

2. KEY CONCEPTS/ DEFINITION

2.1. **Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them. Since this is a social construct, gender may vary across indigenous cultures.

2.2. **Gender-based discrimination** is any act of distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by any gender of human rights and fundamental freedoms (GR No. 28 on the core obligation of State parties under Art. of CEDAW 2010 para. 5 and 6).

2.3. **Gender equality** means that all human beings, both men and women of whatever gender are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices on their careers, lifestyle choices, and relations without discrimination. Their rights, opportunities, and access to society are not different based on their gender but that their different needs and dreams are valued equally. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. Gender equity is often discussed at the same time as gender equality for this reason.



2.4. **Gender equity** refers to a fair and just treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs and in the distribution of responsibilities and benefits between them. This may include equal treatment or different treatment but that is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. As a concept based on justice, gender equity measures result in equality in the enjoyment of human rights. To compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field, temporary positive measures must often be put in place.

In this policy, gender equality is understood here as encompassing both equality and equity.

- Equality means treating all individuals equally despite individual differences.
- Equity means treating everyone according to their individual differences, thus providing them support and assistance according to their requirement and specific condition.



2.5. **Gender identity** refers to women and men's willingness to identify how they are perceived and positioned in a society, and how they are expected to think and act according to traditional views of masculinity and femininity.

2.6. **Gender mainstreaming** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social dimensions towards achieving gender equality.

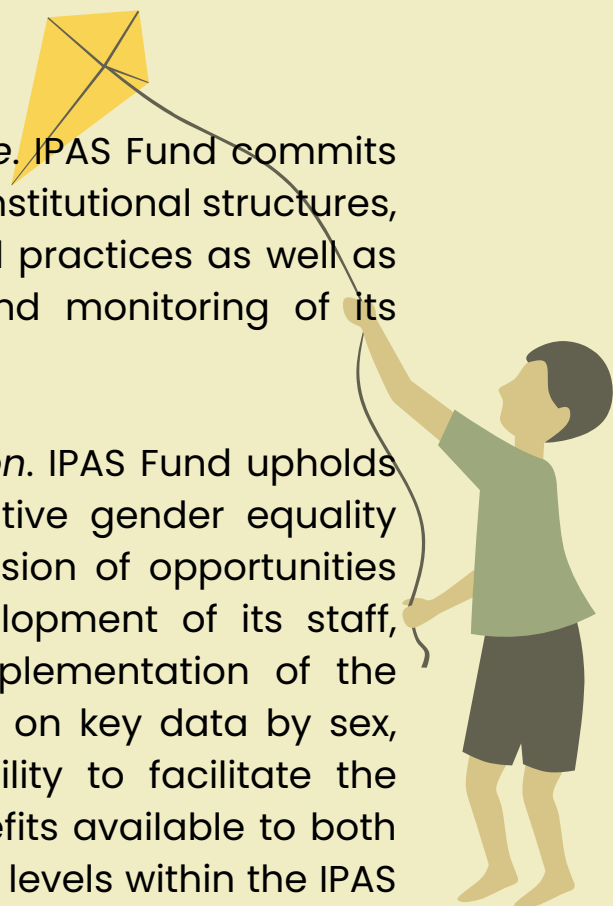
2.7. **Sex** is the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male.

2.8. **Women's empowerment** is the process of gaining access to and developing women's capacities with a view to participating actively in shaping one's own life and that of one's community in economic, social and political terms.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1. *Gender is a crosscutting theme.* IPAS Fund commits to addressing gender issues in its institutional structures, systems, processes, programs and practices as well as in the design, implementation and monitoring of its activities.

3.2. *Equality and non-discrimination.* IPAS Fund upholds the principle to promote substantive gender equality and non-discrimination, e.g., provision of opportunities and access to professional development of its staff, tracking performance on the implementation of the policy by collecting and reporting on key data by sex, gender, age, ethnicity and disability to facilitate the analysis of opportunities and benefits available to both males and females at the different levels within the IPAS Fund.





3.3. *Inclusive participation and representation.* This policy is anchored in the principle that, as a gender-sensitive organization, the IPAS Fund strives for a meaningful participation and representation within its systems, structures and processes at all levels.

3.4. *Transparency and accountability.* The IPAS Fund shall implement this Gender Policy based on the principle of transparency and accountability to ensure that information on the policy, its intended outcomes and effective implementation will be accessible to all within the IPAS. It is the accountability of the IPAS Fund to promote gender equality and equity in relation to its actions to address gender issues within the operations of IPAS Fund.

3.5. *Protection.* IPAS Fund, in its relations, operations and work, commits to protecting indigenous men and women and those who do not identify as either from discrimination, sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, violence, intimidation, retaliation and other denial of the basic human rights due to their sex, their gender identity or their sexual orientation.

4. STRATEGIES

The implementation strategy for achieving the twin goals of gender equality and indigenous women's empowerment is gender mainstreaming which shall situate gender equality and women's empowerment at the center of IPAS Fund structures, systems and processes at all levels. In concrete, IPAS Fund gender mainstreaming will entail the following:

4.1. Application of gender perspective in all stages of program and project development, and in the evaluation of funding proposals:

- Applying a gender analysis in the project cycle, including planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning, impact assessment, and ensuring data disaggregation in preparing reports, etc.
- Where appropriate, formulating measurable gender indicators/sex-disaggregated social and economic indicators and targets and conversely, assessing opportunities to reduce gender inequalities/inequities.
- Ensuring meaningful and active participation of indigenous women in project development, implementation as well as in different IPAS Fund activities.
- Making special efforts and support to women to express themselves and their voices and concerns to be heard directly in all IPAS activities and programs.

4.2. A culturally sensitive and appropriate approach is applied in addressing gender issues. IPAS Fund respects the different roles, responsibilities, rights, obligations, knowledge and skills of indigenous men and women who are involved in or who are affected by the IPAS Fund programs and projects. In this context, the specific needs and circumstances of indigenous women that affect their effective participation in IPAS Fund-related programs and activities.

5. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

5.1 . IPAS Fund Board, Steering Committees and advisory bodies

- Ensure gender balance and meaningful representation in the composition of the Governance Structure and related mechanisms to ensure the integration of indigenous women's perspectives, views and concerns in the deliberations and decisions in the bodies.
- Ensure that the IPAS Fund programs reflect the strategies of this Gender Policy.

5.2 . Management and organizational leadership

- Ensure gender balance and representation in staffing of the Secretariat and other coordination mechanisms established by IPAS Fund at all levels and types of positions.
- Ensure that the IPAS Fund work culture in the Governance Structure and Secretariat is based on mutual respect, civility and shared key values of gender equality, good governance, accountability and transparency.
- Staff induction and development must include this Policy and gender-awareness, knowledge and skills for the Secretariat and assess and review any on-going needs.
- Guarantee zero tolerance on all forms of violence in the structure, processes, and operations of the IPAS Fund.
- Ensure that staff and board members are aware of the IPAS Fund Gender Policy and that discriminatory practices are prevented including gender stereotyping and all forms of violence.



- Promote and implement gender balance in all programs, relevant activities and address specific concerns of indigenous women and girls to facilitate their active and meaningful participation.
- Ensure gender perspective in planning, implementation, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of IPAS Fund programs and activities.
- For IPAS-funded programs, projects and activities, the Secretariat shall inform implementing partners about the IPAS Fund Gender Policy. IPAS Fund reserves the right not to fund nominated partners to IPAS Fund activities if gender balance is not observed.
- Ensure data disaggregation and inclusion of women's perspective in the activity and program reports of the implementing partners, the Secretariat, and other entities.
- Develop gender-sensitive approaches and methods of work/methodologies for all IPAS Fund programs and projects as appropriate.
- Oversee the monitoring, evaluation and review of the implementation of Gender Policy and record, share and report the experiences, outcomes and impacts in relation to gender equality mainstreaming to stakeholders when necessary.
- Promote Gender Policy to implementing partners to undertake their best efforts to carry forward this Gender Policy within their own organization; support may be given to develop, adapt and localize such policy as appropriate.
- Use gender-sensitive language in texts referring to both women and men to make them equally visible. This applies to communications, forms, documents, telephone directories, texts on the intranet and the internet, advertising for events, folders, posters and films. Attention must also be paid to a gender-sensitive choice of images when preparing public relations materials.
- Gender assessment and analysis on their situation must provide the basis for all decisions.

6.3. Charitable donations

- All targets related to people are defined in terms of full equality as realistically as possible and the targets attained are, therefore, presented by gender to facilitate the gender-specific evaluation of results.
- Workplaces must be structurally gendered and barrier free where possible (e.g., gendered signage, sufficient lighting, avoiding potentially frightening situations, breastfeeding areas and children's spaces in the office to avoid poorly accessible rooms, access without steps, social rooms for different occupations).
- Formulate further guidelines for the implementation of this Gender Policy where appropriate,
- Provide resources and technical assistance for the implementation of this Policy within the secretariat and to the partners as needed including the resources to the partners to translate, localize and adopt this policy.

6. REDRESS MECHANISM

The IPAS Fund Grievance Mechanism is provided in the Operations Guidelines for the governing of any matter relating to the violation of this policy.



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