

IIRR Gender Equality, Equity, and Social Inclusion Policy

Introduction and Rationale

IIRR affirms that gender equality, equity, and social inclusion are fundamental human rights and essential conditions for achieving sustainable development, community resilience, and lasting poverty reduction. The organization recognizes that women, girls, men, boys, and people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), as well as people with disabilities, Indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized populations, experience different forms of inequality that shape their opportunities and capabilities. These inequalities are rooted in social norms, discriminatory structures, unequal power relations, exclusionary institutional practices, and intersecting forms of oppression.

As a global organization working across diverse cultures and contexts, IIRR commits to promoting gender-transformative approaches in its programs and partnerships that address systemic barriers and advance dignity, agency, voice, safety, and equitable access to resources and decision-making for all people.

Vision and Commitment

IIRR envisions rural communities where every individual—regardless of gender, age, identity, disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background—can participate fully and equally in shaping their future. The organization commits to integrating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) across all strategies, programs, partnerships, and internal systems. This includes aligning with international frameworks such as CEDAW, the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 5), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and principles of Do No Harm, safeguarding, and survivor-centered protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEA).

IIRR will work to create an enabling environment in which women, girls, men, boys, and gender-diverse individuals can exercise their rights without discrimination or fear of violence, and where staff and partners are empowered to model inclusive and equitable practices.

Objectives of the Policy

This policy seeks to ensure that gender equality and inclusion are embedded in all dimensions of IIRR's work. It aims to provide a clear framework that holds leadership, management, staff, and partners accountable to measurable standards of gender responsiveness and equity. The policy further aims to strengthen staff capacity, promote organizational learning, and foster environments where gender-transformative change can occur.

The policy's overarching objectives include ensuring equitable access to opportunities and benefits; cultivating workplaces that are safe, respectful, and free from harassment or

discrimination; strengthening program quality through gender-responsive design, implementation, and evaluation; and promoting community participation and leadership across all groups.

Organizational Culture and Internal Practices

IIRR is committed to cultivating a workplace culture that embodies fairness, mutual respect, inclusivity, and equitable participation. The organization will maintain human resource policies that explicitly prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender, SOGIESC, disability, marital or reproductive status, ethnicity, age, or any other identity marker. Recruitment, promotion, and leadership development processes will prioritize equitable representation of women, men, and gender-diverse individuals, particularly in senior and decision-making roles. The organization will provide equal access to professional development, flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies, and reasonable workplace accommodations for staff with disabilities or caregiving responsibilities. All new staff will receive orientation on gender equality, safeguarding, PSEA, and appropriate conduct, and these expectations will be reinforced through ongoing training, supervision, and performance evaluations.

Program Design, Implementation, and Partnerships

IIRR will ensure that all programs are grounded in robust gender and social inclusion analyses that identify structural barriers, power dynamics, and differentiated needs. Program design will integrate gender-transformative approaches aimed at shifting harmful norms, expanding agency, and increasing equitable access to and control over resources, opportunities, and decision-making. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems may collect sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data and assess gender outcomes, inclusion barriers, and differential impacts on various groups. Partnerships will be guided by shared commitments to gender equality and safeguarding, and partner capacity will be strengthened through training, tools, and collaborative planning. IIRR will support the meaningful participation of marginalized groups in program governance structures, ensuring that community voices—including women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and gender-diverse individuals—shape program priorities and outcomes.

Inclusive Communication and Representation

All IIRR communications—publications, reports, social media, trainings, and visual materials—will model gender-sensitive and inclusive language and imagery. Communications will avoid stereotypes, degrading portrayals, or narratives that reinforce traditional gender roles. Instead, IIRR will seek to portray the diverse leadership, resilience, and agency of women, men, and gender-diverse people. Staff will be encouraged to challenge gender-insensitive language and to adopt communication practices that promote dignity, rights, and inclusion.

Safeguarding, Protection, and Safety

IIRR upholds a zero-tolerance policy toward gender-based violence (GBV), workplace harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and any form of discrimination targeting

gender or identity. Safe, confidential, and survivor-centered reporting mechanisms will be available to all staff, community members, and partners. Complaints will be handled promptly, fairly, and with strict respect for confidentiality and non-retaliation. Field activities will be conducted with a commitment to participant safety, including attention to mobility, accessibility, trauma-informed approaches, and risk mitigation for women, girls, and marginalized groups.

Monitoring, Accountability, and Learning

The implementation of this policy will be monitored regularly through organizational audits, program reviews, and staff performance processes. Senior leadership is responsible for ensuring organizational alignment with gender equality commitments, while all staff share responsibility for integrating gender-sensitive practices into their work. Annual reports, regional strategies, and program evaluations will include gender and inclusion outcomes, as well as lessons learned and recommended improvements.

IIRR will review this policy at least every two years to ensure continued relevance, alignment with global standards, and responsiveness to emerging issues. The organization remains committed to growing as a learning institution that continuously strengthens its gender-transformative approaches.

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