



Gender Equality Policy for International IDEA

2002-2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Institute is mandated by its founding declaration to promote and advance sustainable democracy world-wide; strengthen and support national capacity to develop the full range of democratic instruments; provide a meeting place for exchanges between those involved in electoral processes in the context of democratic institution-building, and increase knowledge and enhance learning about democratic electoral processes in the context of democratic development.

International IDEA fosters, sustains and promotes democracy around the world, supporting all aspects of the democratic process. To advocate and support gender equality is an integral part of building democracy. IDEA's policy on gender equality derives from universal human rights and democratic values. The main objective is to achieve gender equality, a fundamental principle of democracy and a prerequisite for sustainable human development. The **Policy** provides the rationale, starting points and priorities for the promotion of gender equality between women and men in all activities. The policy shall be followed by an

Action Plan, specifying *how* gender equality shall be promoted in the organization and in the work plan of IDEA.

The gender policy entails a twofold focus: internally within the Institute and in the Institute's activities and work programmes.

FOCUS OF THE POLICY

The policy presents the objectives of gender equality of the Institute:

- The policy presents the prioritized areas for mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in working and management procedures and processes, work programmes, staff rules as well as in the culture and attitudes within IDEA;
- The policy creates the platform with objectives that enables IDEA to create an **Action Plan** for mainstreaming gender equality in the activities, work plans, and the organization, and
- The policy allows allocation of appropriate resources to initiatives for mainstreaming gender equality at IDEA.

2. PROCESS

The task of developing a gender policy for the Institute was initiated in 2001, and adopted for implementation in the Gender and Political Participation work plan for 2002. Commitment to developing the gender policy was again endorsed by the Management Committee on 18 March 2002. A Gender Policy Steering Committee was established in February 2002 to assume overall responsibility for the development of the gender policy, with regular consultation with an Institute-wide Gender Working Group. In order to make the gender policy operational and to obtain an ownership, it has been important to have a wide range of participation in the development of this policy. The Institute believes that the inclusion and participatory process will facilitate the implementation of the policy, and thereafter the Action Plan.

The participatory process has been undertaken by collecting as many views and standpoints as possible from the personnel of the Institute. This has been done through workshops and individual interviews as well as group interviews. Telephone interviews took place with out-posted personnel and a questionnaire was sent to all personnel at the Institute. Before the final draft was submitted, a first draft was circulated to all staff and a workshop was held in order to communicate comments and views. This policy was endorsed by the Board and Council during the June 2002 meetings.

3. WHY A POLICY FOR GENDER EQUALITY?

International IDEA's member States and associate members are committed to respecting and implementing the international standards of human rights and gender equality. Most of IDEA's member States are party to the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The nature and scope of IDEA's mandate and its inclusive approach towards promoting sustainable democracy create ideal pre-conditions to foster an innovative and progressive approach toward gender equality within its programme work and within the internal organization.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of her or his country regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or sex. Since women constitute 50 percent of the populations in most countries where IDEA is active, women's equal right of access to political and government structures needs to be emphasized. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making positions will provide a balance which more accurately reflects the composition of the society, interests and the general good of all citizens.

IDEA believes that different perspectives enrich and enhance the quality of the work. The diversity of perspectives and experiences with regard to gender, sex, ethnicity, nationality, religious and cultural beliefs, represented through the staff of IDEA is highly valued and a part of our characteristics and strength. Therefore, where women and/or men are underrepresented in activities within the Institute and/or in programme activities, emphasizing a gender equality perspective is necessary.

4. DEFINING GENDER

Gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being a female and male and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men and girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are largely socially constructed and learned through socialization processes. Like the concepts of class and/or ethnicity, gender is an analytical tool for understanding a social process. In brief:

Sex (biological sex) refers to the biological distinction between females and males by nature of birth.

Gender (social sex) refers to the socially and culturally learned identity and relations: what we often refer to as woman/man or girl/boy. The identity of

gender does not come from birth. It is socially and culturally constructed and can therefore change over time and cultures.

Gender is not only about roles but also about relations. What we say that women or men are or shall do is related to the question of who sets the rules. Gender is also about power, privileges, responsibilities, rights and duties.

In any working environment or organization the values, attitudes and beliefs of its personnel regarding gender is transformed and expressed into the institutional and structural system, the culture and the normative framework of the organization.

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a levelled playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender equality implies that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal opportunities for realising their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and to benefit from results thereof.

Gender equality includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative perspective concerns the physical gender balance in numerical terms. The qualitative perspective focuses on the equal distribution of power for both women and men.

5. RATIONALE FOR MAINSTREAMING

A strategy for mainstreaming gender equality encompasses all aspects of society with regard to the distribution of the resources, opportunities and benefits. Mainstreaming gender equality means transforming the "mainstream" and focusing on the systems and structures that create disadvantages for women and men rather than isolated phenomena.

Mainstreaming gender equality at IDEA can only be done from within. It is about the perspective from which the Institute acts, how we operate, our beliefs and values, how we prioritize, whose needs we focus on and how we make our decisions.

At the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) mainstreaming is emphasized in the *Platform for Action* with regard to two aspects:

- Equitable distribution of the resources, opportunities and benefits of the mainstream development process. This requires the integration of equality concerns into the analysis and formulation of policies, programmes and

projects, with the objective of ensuring that these have a positive impact on women and reduce gender disparities.

- The inclusion of interests, needs, experiences and visions of women in the definition of development approaches, policies and programmes and in determining the overall development agenda. This requires strategies to enable both women and men to formulate and express their views and participate in decision-making across all development issues.

6. IDEA'S GENDER OBJECTIVES

- Gender equality is a fundamental and integral part of democracy and shall therefore be mainstreamed and promoted in International IDEA's work programmes and organization.
- International IDEA shall be an organization where women and men are given equal opportunities and where each individual competence is being valued and used in the best way possible.
- International IDEA shall be an organization free from any form of discrimination on the basis of gender and sex.

7. GENDER EQUALITY IN THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

7.1 WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Overall objective:

- √ The psychological and physical working environment shall suit both women and men.

A good working environment is a prerequisite for content personnel and sustainable high quality results in an organization. A psychological and physical working environment that suits both women and men should advocate, stimulate and create a climate where both women's and men's full competence and capacity are acknowledged, used and appreciated. The working environment and the workload of each staff member shall be discussed on a regular basis with the responsible manager. Furthermore, the environment shall be free from norms and cultures that divide duties with respect to sexes.

Overall objective:

- √ IDEA shall facilitate the combination of gainful employment with successful parenting for both women and men.

IDEA believes that pregnancy and parenthood are a natural part of life. IDEA will benefit from contributing positively to parenthood, as it enables commitment and loyalty from those staff members who are parents. In order to facilitate the

combination of gainful employment with successful parenting, focus must be set on both the normative cultures as well as on a de facto practical level. IDEA believes that a better balance between women and men regarding parental responsibility (including parental leave) will, on a long term perspective, have a positive and wide ranging impact on the society as a whole, when both women and men share the responsibility of children.

Overall objective:

- ✓ IDEA shall use gender neutral language

IDEA recognises that the use of language is an integral part of communicating and advocating gender equality.

7.2 EMPLOYMENT

7.2.1 Recruitment

Overall objectives:

- ✓ Recruitment to IDEA shall be based on the highest standard and in accordance with the needs of the Institute.
- ✓ A numerical gender balance shall be promoted at all posts and levels.

IDEA believes that reaching and also upholding a gender balance on all posts within the organization and within its activities offers several advantages. Examples of these advantages are:

- The reflection of the population in the world - approximately 50 percent female and 50 percent male.
- Women and men are different in a number of aspects. Making equal use of both sexes encompasses more perspectives and more qualities and inputs.
- As an Institute with the primary task of promoting democracy, where gender equality is a fundament for equal rights, opportunity, access of power etc, it is of utmost importance to reflect those conditions in the organization's own structure.

7.2.2 Performance - Performance Appraisal

Overall objectives:

- ✓ Each staff member's full potential is to be used and explored in any way possible.
- ✓ Implementation of gender equality is merit for Performance Appraisal

IDEA believes that utilising the full capacity of its personnel will lead to the most beneficial result, e.g. securing that women and men, on equal terms, will be able to use their full capabilities, both individually and as a team. As gender equality is a prioritised task it shall be made visible and rewarded.

7.2.3 Salaries and Job evaluation

Overall objectives:

- √ IDEA shall apply equal pay for equal work.
- √ Posts at IDEA shall be objectively valued regardless of sex.

IDEA recognizes that establishing pay criteria and the value placed on different posts may derive from values of subjective judgments. It is therefore highly important to eliminate any aspects that could lead to discrimination or be interpreted as such.

7.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Overall objective

- √ IDEA shall provide a safe and secure workplace free of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct based on sex and/or of sexual nature. It is important that all staff members are aware of the definitions of sexual harassment and know where to turn, and that disciplinary action will be taken, if the matter should occur.

8. ACTIVITIES AND WORK PROGRAMMES

Overall objectives:

- √ A gender equality perspective shall be promoted at all stages of the project cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation), with the objective of ensuring that the activities offer equal opportunities, benefits, participation and rights to women and men.
- √ All publications and information materials shall reflect IDEA's commitment to gender equality and include the interests, needs, and experiences, visions and impacts with regard to women and men.
- √ IDEA shall use gender-neutral language.
- √ A numerical and qualitative gender balance shall be promoted among the participants at all levels, at conferences, workshops and meetings arranged by IDEA.

- √ A gender balance shall be advocated among staff, contracted consultants/advisors and other persons recruited by IDEA.
- √ A gender perspective shall be integrated in the definition of procured services as well as in the terms of references and other procurement documentation.

In order to mainstream gender equality in the work programme, a clear project cycle needs to be emphasized, where entry points for follow-up on gender equality perspectives can be identified. A thorough gender analysis of the national context is an entry point for mainstreaming the projects to the specific situation. A sincere effort must therefore be made to highlight inequalities and to take action on the promotion of gender equality. Clear operational goals should be set for each programme and project with regard to strengthening gender equality.

The publications of IDEA communicate facts, values and attitudes and will therefore be subject of scrutiny with regard to gender equality.

9. CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY

In order to successfully mainstream gender equality, the staff is highly dependent on awareness and capacity-building. The Institute shall therefore allocate time and funding for training and advisory services. As skills are achieved and awareness developed, training should be designed within a framework of a continuous process, suiting different levels and different needs. A strategy for training should be included in the Action Plan.

Gender related training must emphasize the following topics:

1. Gender and gender equality
2. Awareness training - methodology
3. Human resource management related issues for management levels and HR-unit (recruitment, performance appraisal, norms and attitudes in an organization)
4. Gender mainstreaming of programmes/projects.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The management of International IDEA is committed to the integration of a gender equality perspective in the organization, work programmes and publications. The policy will be followed by an Action Plan defining specific, measurable activities with a clear definition of the responsibility for implementation and monitoring. Line managers shall ensure that gender equality filters all plans of operations, programmes and projects, specifying the actions to

be taken within each programme/activity. The Action Plan shall be renewed/revised every year. The policy shall be updated every three years and co-ordinated with the strategic planning of IDEA.

The implementation of the gender policy and the development of an Action Plan rests with the Secretary-General and management. The structures and mechanisms needed to support the implementation of the gender policy and Action Plan are to be determined by the Management Committee of the Institute and defined in the Action Plan.

11. RESOURCES

A prerequisite for change is above all the commitment of the management and the motivation of the staff members to take on this challenge. But all new tasks demand time, will and requisite staffing. The management shall therefore secure that time and adequate funds will be allocated within the institutional budget as well as project budgets.