



FARM RADIO  RADIOS RURALES  
INTERNATIONAL INTERNATIONALES

# GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

*Approved by the Board of Directors, April 2022*

## DEFINITIONS

**Diversity** refers in this policy to the wide variety of characteristics and social identity factors among individuals, and the mix of these in any group of people. These characteristics and social identity factors include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, (dis)abilities, migration/legal status, life experiences. FRI recognizes that diversity is a fact in all communities, while inclusion is a process.

**Empowerment** refers in this policy to processes that create an enabling environment for women, men and those with non-normative gender identities to make choices and influence decisions that lead to their own desired outcomes, through negotiating power relations and gaining greater control over their lives and livelihoods.

**Gender Equality** refers in this policy to the idea that all people, regardless of gender identity or expression, are valued and treated equally and enjoy equal rights and opportunities to access, control and benefit from social, economic, and political resources and decision making. These equal rights are protected by international law, and apply to women, men, boys and girls, as well as people of non-normative gender identities.

**Gender Transformative Approach** refers in this policy to deep structural and systemic change achieved by addressing the root causes of gender inequality. Gender transformative approach requires strategies that go beyond symptoms of gender inequality to address the attitudes, behaviours, and systems that underpin them. It is about transforming unequal power relations and the structures and norms - visible and invisible - that reinforce them.

**Gender-Based and Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, Discrimination and Violence** refers in this policy to all abuses of human rights and power on the basis of gender, which sometimes take a sexual form. See also Policy E.4.3: Safeguarding/Protection from Sexual Misconduct, Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse.

**Intersectionality** refers in this policy to the idea that intersecting systems of oppression affect the experiences of people based on their multiple, interconnected identities and realities. This framework for analyzing power emphasizes the importance of recognizing that people experience mutually reinforcing and compounded barriers to equality related to gender, race, ethnicity, age, ability, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and other factors.

**Inclusion** refers in this policy to the process of creating a culture that embraces, respects, accepts, and values diversity. It is a mindful and equitable effort to meet individual needs so that everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute to their fullest potential. Diversity occurs naturally as it refers to the composition of a group, whereas inclusion is the intentional process that meaningfully engages everybody in all of their diversity.

**Non-Normative Gender Identities** refers in this policy to people identifying with genders other than 'man' or 'woman' which includes, but is not limited to trans, non-binary, non-conforming and two-spirit people.

**Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC)** refers in this policy to recognizing the diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics that exist beyond the binary genders of 'man' and 'woman', the normative sexual orientation of heterosexuality, and the binary sexes of 'male' and 'female'.

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Farm Radio International (FRI) acknowledges that gender-based inequalities can prevent women and other marginalized groups from benefiting from development initiatives and from exercising their communication and other rights. Gender-specific inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa often include limited/lack of access to information or expression, land and financial resources, markets, vocational training, equipment, technology, health services, education and decision making processes within households and local (e.g., farmer) associations, and unequal unpaid care responsibilities, as well as unequal risk of discrimination and violence.

FRI acknowledges that human rights, especially **women and girls’ rights**, such as the right to equality, dignity, respect and freedom from violence and discrimination, are enshrined in international law, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. These rights include the right to own property; the right to information and expression; to earn a fair and equal wage, to participate in public life; to be recognized as a person before the law.

FRI also acknowledges that gender equality cannot be achieved without the participation of men and boys at all levels of society. To this end, FRI encourages, supports and recognizes men and boys for challenging gender norms, systems and relations of power, taking a more active role in traditionally women’s domains (e.g., child/elder care, housework, etc.) and encouraging women’s access to non-traditional domains and spheres of decision making.

FRI promotes the use of an **intersectionality** framework. There is diversity in the ways in which people hold power and privilege, as well as hierarchy. Systemic discrimination due to (dis)ability, age, socio-economic status, literacy and language, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics (SOGIESC), refugee or migration status and religion, among other aspects of one’s identity, create intersecting systems of oppression or advantage.

**Inclusion** is also central in FRI’s approach, aiming at ensuring that all groups of people can exercise their right to participate in society and public life, particularly for those who are marginalized, through enhancing access to and control over resources, opportunities, voice and respect for rights.

FRI aims to promote communication justice by dismantling barriers to people, in all their diversity, realizing the full benefits of information and expression. FRI believes that information and communications technologies are integral to empowering women and other marginalized groups by amplifying their voices and facilitating collective action to advance the full enjoyment of human rights.

FRI values **empowerment** as a process that creates an enabling environment for people, in all their diversity, to make choices and influence decisions that lead to their own desired outcomes, through negotiating power relations, deconstructing gendered systems of oppression and gaining greater control over their lives and livelihoods.





## POLICY

FRI is committed to promoting gender equality and inclusion (GEI) and advancing women's rights in all its work, particularly through the implementation of gender responsive and transformative approaches to communication for development.

Specifically, FRI commits to:

1. **Institutionalize GEI at FRI**, creating a working environment at all FRI offices and in all operations that supports GEI, and that is free from gender-based and sexual harassment, exploitation, discrimination and violence, and where women and a diversity of individuals have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in decisions at all levels of governance.
2. **Be a leader** in gender transformative, inclusive and intersectional rights-based interactive radio programming and communication for development that includes:
  - a. **Representing** rural women and men equitably and respectfully in agricultural production and marketing, decision-making and rural development;
  - b. **Increasing access** to radio listening and participation by rural women and other groups experiencing marginalization using radio, listening groups and interactive communication technologies;
  - c. **Supporting local organizations** and informal groups focused on GEI, especially those working on women's rights and those led by women, to harness the potential of interactive radio and mass media to advance women's rights, and GEI;
  - d. **Supporting partner radio stations** in addressing issues of GEI on air, questioning unequal power relations and promoting gender transformative practices in their radio programs; and
  - e. **Systematizing and sharing good practices and learning** through rigorous research and participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies, especially with the communities and people FRI serves and learns from.
3. **Encourage a positive working environment at partner radio** stations that supports GEI, promotes women's access to decision making and positions of authority, and the prevention of and response to gender-based and sexual harassment, exploitation, discrimination and violence.
4. **Develop the capacity of rural radio stations and broadcasters** to transform gender norms, address intersecting systems of oppression and promote the rights of women and marginalized groups through radio programming, and mass media.
5. **Be Accountable** by continually seeking to strengthen its application of this policy to all of its work. FRI will hold itself accountable to this policy by reviewing its progress, and seeking stakeholder feedback.



## PROCEDURE(S)

This policy applies to all FRI staff, volunteers, consultants, partners and the Board of Directors. All staff at every level are responsible for the implementation of this GEI policy. The Board of Directors is responsible for the review and oversight of the policy and related action plans.

The procedures that will be followed to realize the policy will be elaborated in a GEI Operational Policy and Procedures guide. The guide will outline procedures for:

1. Institutionalizing GEI at FRI by creating a safe working environment at all FRI offices that supports GEI and is free from gender-based and sexual harassment, exploitation, discrimination and violence; and where women and other marginalized groups participate equally in decisions at all levels of governance.
2. Developing, implementing and monitoring a long term (five years or more) GEI plan with goals, activities and targets that will advance GEI. Progress will be reviewed by the Board annually. The plan will be reviewed and refreshed at least every five years to take into account FRI's experiences, results, and new thinking about equality and gender.

The plan will include strategies for:

- a. Integrating considerations for GEI in fundraising, public engagement, and communications efforts and materials;
- b. Strengthening staff awareness of and capacity for integrating and promoting GEI in their work;
- c. Conducting annual reviews of the participation of women and other marginalized groups in decision making at all levels;
- d. Developing and maintaining an FRI GEI team with an active role in programming and organizational decision making;
- e. Delivering gender transformative, inclusive, rights-based programming that responds to the specific needs and interests of marginalized people in all their diversity, and advances gender equality, inclusion and women's rights by developing powerful ways of using Communication for Development and interactive radio programming;
- f. Integrating GEI considerations in the project implementation cycle, from project development to monitoring, evaluation and learning; and
- g. Supporting and encouraging partner radio stations to commit to GEI through measures that:
  - i. facilitate women's and other marginalized people's access to decision making and positions of leadership at their radio station;
  - ii. give more space to the voices of women and other marginalized people, and their information needs in the station's radio programs;
  - iii. prevent gender-based and sexual harassment, exploitation, discrimination and violence at the radio station and when staff and volunteers are working in the wider community;
  - iv. forge links with national and local organizations involved in the promotion of gender equality and women's rights; and
  - v. represent the diverse, dynamic and changing roles women, men and those of non-normative gender identities play in development.



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- We work in partnership with hundreds of radio
- stations across 36 sub-Saharan African countries and
- have offices in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali,
- Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- We also work closely with our strategic partner Farm
- Radio Trust in Malawi.
- Together, we reach tens of millions of small-scale
- farmers and rural Africans with life-changing
- information and opportunities to have a stronger
- voice in their own development.