

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

People in Focus





GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP) PEOPLE IN FOCUS

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1. Introduction

People in Focus is an independent, non-governmental, and non-political organization established in 2014. Our mission is to act as a catalyst for creating political and social spaces that foster cooperation based on values such as trust, service, and the common good.

Our core purpose is to raise citizens' awareness regarding the quality of services they receive and to encourage their involvement in analysis, monitoring, and evaluation processes at both the local and judicial levels. We believe in empowering citizens to take action on issues that impact their lives. Through advocacy and institutional dialogue, we aim to be a trusted intermediary that promotes small but impactful changes in public services, increases accountability, and reduces opportunities for corruption.

OUR VISION

WE are the people, the Citizens

OUR MISSION

Our aspiration is to voice the concerns of citizens, increase the accountability and responsibility of institutions, foster a sense of community, address unmet needs, and as a result, achieve increased well-being. Society will always need independent organizations and individuals who act as watchdogs, ethical guardians and advocates of marginalized people. Civil society, in all its forms, has an important role in increasing social accountability at the highest levels. We aim to extend our influence to poor and remote areas, to identify their local needs, to promote participation. Utilizing their human resources, we can raise awareness about the concepts of responsibility and accountability. Our goal is to play a particularly important role as a promoter and instigator, to create political and social spaces for cooperation, based on values such as trust, service and the general good.

2. Guiding Resources

People in Focus views gender equality as a fundamental principle that strengthens social fairness, drives sustainable progress, and enhances the well-being of the communities we engage with. This **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** reflects our dedication to building inclusive and respectful spaces—both within our organization and in the wider community—where everyone can participate fully, regardless of their gender identity or how they express it. Our mission is to challenge inequality, raise awareness, and promote equal opportunities.

GEP sets out a series of internal policies and practices aimed at creating inclusive changes.

This framework draws on widely recognized **international instruments**, as well as **Albanian national laws and commitments**, including:

- **Constitution of the Republic of Albania (1998, amended):** The Constitution is the supreme law of Albania, establishing the foundation for all rights and freedoms. Article 18 states that *all citizens are equal before the law and prohibits discrimination based on sex, among other grounds. It guarantees equal rights and duties for men and women.*
- **Law No. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 – “On Gender Equality in Society”:** This is the primary specialized law dedicated to promoting gender equality across all sectors of society. Prohibits all forms of direct and indirect discrimination based on gender. Mandates equal participation of women and men in political, economic, cultural, and social life.
- **Law No. 10 221, dated 04.02.2010 – “On Protection from Discrimination”:** This law is Albania’s main legal framework to prevent and address discrimination in all areas of life. It aligns with international human rights standards and promotes equal treatment for all individuals.
- **Labour Code of Albania (Law No. 7961/1995, amended):** Article 5 prohibits discrimination in employment based on gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, political beliefs, social origin, disability, age, or other personal characteristics not related to job requirements. Article 20 cites that *men and women have equal rights to access employment opportunities, professional training, promotion, and working conditions.*
- **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030:** This strategy outlines the country’s long-term commitment to promoting gender equality and eliminating

gender-based discrimination and violence. Its key features include a focus on empowering women and girls economically, increasing their participation in decision-making and leadership, and preventing and responding to gender-based and domestic violence, including trafficking in human beings.

Furthermore, People in Focus developed its Gender Equality Plan using internationally recognized instruments.

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015), especially Goal 5 (Gender Equality)
- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)
- The GEAR tool, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality

By implementing this plan, People in Focus commits to being an active agent of change in building a society where gender no longer determines access to opportunity, recognition, or decision-making power.

3. Aims and Objectives

The Gender Equality Plan aims to promote inclusiveness and equity across all operations of People in Focus. It addresses gender imbalances, embeds gender perspectives in organizational structures and activities, and promotes a respectful and supportive workplace culture.

Strategic Aims:

- Promote gender equality and equal opportunities for all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.
- Create a respectful, inclusive, and safe working environment.
- Integrate gender perspectives into the organization's operations and programming.

Objectives:

- Ensure equal opportunities for career advancement regardless of gender.
- Increase gender balance in decision-making and leadership roles.
- Provide gender sensitivity training for all staff.
- Implement flexible working conditions and family-friendly policies.
- Mainstream gender in project development and implementation.
- Prevent and respond to gender-based violence and harassment.

4. Essential Factors for Gender Equality

1.1 Work-life balance and Organisational Culture

People in Focus recognizes the value of a supportive and respectful working environment that contributes to individual well-being and professional satisfaction. While we do not claim to solve all challenges related to work-life balance, we remain attentive to the importance of cultivating an organizational culture that encourages open communication, mutual respect, and understanding of diverse personal and professional needs.

Main Actions:

- Facilitate flexible working options, including adaptable hours and occasional remote work when possible, in accordance with organizational needs.
- Organize periodic team-building activities to promote collaboration and a positive work environment.
- Encourage inclusivity, empathy, and appreciation of diversity in everyday workplace culture.

People in Focus is committed to cultivating a healthy and inclusive work environment that prioritizes physical and mental well-being. We encourage openness, diversity, and respect, while upholding a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment.

1.2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Achieving gender equality requires equitable representation in leadership. Currently, all leadership roles at People in Focus are held by women, including five women on the board of directors and a female Executive Director. This reflects important progress in women's leadership. Moving forward, we will ensure that leadership opportunities are open and accessible to all genders.

Main Actions:

- Promote gender balance in the board of directors and leadership teams.
- Encourage the recruitment of men and gender-diverse individuals to governance roles.
- Raise internal awareness on the importance of gender balance and inclusive leadership.

1.3 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Recruitment and promotion at People in Focus are based on merit, transparency, and fairness. We aim to achieve gender balance across all staff levels and project teams, ensuring equitable access to opportunities for women, men, and gender minorities.

The diverse team brings different perspectives and experiences to our work, which helps improve the initiatives taken to meet the communities' needs. To ensure fair career development, all team members are given the possibility to engage in trainings, provide with tools, and offered space to upgrade their skills.

Main actions:

- Include a gender equality component in the recruitment process
- Create opportunities to attend training in leadership skills to employees
- Balanced gender representation among project implementation staff

1.4 Gender Dimension in Research and Educational Content

Integrating gender perspectives into research and educational content enhances the impact of our projects. People in Focus promotes gender-sensitive methodologies in all trainings, workshops, youth exchanges, and awareness-raising campaigns.

Main Actions:

- Apply basic gender analysis during the planning of new research or educational activities, where possible.
- Offer periodic training to staff and facilitators on how to apply gender-sensitive approaches.
- When capacity allows, gather and review gender-disaggregated data to refine the design and delivery of learning tools.
- Use available resources to develop or adapt inclusive materials and methods that promote gender equality within our projects.

1.5 Measures against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

People in Focus acknowledges the importance of creating a safe and respectful work environment. As a small organization, our resources for addressing gender-based violence are limited, but we strive to integrate feasible and meaningful actions into our daily operations and program activities. Our approach is guided by our commitment to dignity, inclusion, and human rights.

Main Actions:

- Develop and share basic guidance with staff on how to recognize and respond to gender-based violence in a responsible and supportive manner.
- Include information on GBV prevention and respectful conduct in internal trainings, when possible.
- Encourage open dialogue and feedback to identify and address potential risks or concerns.
- Set up a reporting mechanism if facing gender based violence
- Refer serious cases or disclosures to appropriate external support services or institutional mechanisms when needed.

5. Dedicated Resources

The implementation of the GEP is led by the Executive Director and endorsed by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the plan's execution, monitoring its progress, and reporting outcomes. All staff are encouraged to actively engage with and contribute to the GEP.

6. Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation are critical for the successful implementation of the Gender Equality Plan. Progress will be reviewed regularly to gather feedback and make improvements where needed.

7. Conclusion

People in Focus acknowledges that building a diverse and inclusive organization is an ongoing effort. We are committed to upholding gender equality as a core value within our internal structures and in all external collaborations. Through this Gender Equality Plan, we aim to stay aligned with national strategies and international best practices, while creating positive, lasting impact in the communities we serve.

To ensure relevance and responsiveness, this Gender Equality Plan will be reviewed and updated as needed to reflect organizational growth, contextual changes, and evolving gender equality goals.

The GEP will be made publicly available on our website and shared with employers, collaborators, and key partners to promote transparency and accountability.