

Both ENDS Gender policy 2017 - 2020



1. Introduction

The project 'Women and the Environment' was one of the two corner stones that formed the basis for Both ENDS in 1986. Over the years, linking natural resources management and women's rights and gender equality have always been a focus of our work, although the levels of attention varied significantly. Since 2005, Both ENDS has increasingly been integrating gender considerations in its projects and programs, recognising gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development and a manifestation of social justice.

This policy describes Both ENDS' understanding of the importance of gender equality and women's rights in relation to its mission, and defines our commitment to address gender equality as a cross-cutting issue.

Gender is a concept that "refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context and time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities." (OSAGI, 2001, p. 2)

2. Role of gender equality in Both ENDS

Both ENDS considers gender equality as an integral part of this mission: inclusiveness and social justice includes equal rights and opportunities for men and women. In fact, gender disparities are among the deepest and most pervasive of all inequalities. For example, according to the best available data approximately 70% of those who live on less than a dollar each day are women (IUCN, GGCA, & UNDP, 2009, p. 14). Worldwide, women occupy only 22% of the parliamentary seats and 18% of the ministerial positions (UNDP, 2015, p. 111). And available data show that women landholders are significantly fewer than male landholders in all regions of the world (FAO Gender and Land Rights Database).

Apart from the moral imperative against the systematic discrimination of 50% of the world's population, gender equality is a prerequisite for achieving the goals of sustainable development and environmental justice. Women - who make up over half of the world's population - have to be involved, not only as victims of unsustainable and gender irresponsible policies, but also because of their strong role and potential as agents of change, being at the forefront to protect their environment and promote sustainable livelihoods (UN Women Watch, 2009).

In all work areas of Both ENDS, gender dimensions play a role. In the use of drylands, forests or water, women have specific knowledge and play a crucial role in the management of these resources. Women and girls (have to) take up the responsibility to support their families and the community, and therefore spend large part of their time on the collection and production of food, fuel wood, fodder and water, both in urban and rural areas. Formal control over natural resources, including formal land titles and free and safe access to water, are however mostly vested in the hands of men (FAO, 2011). In politics and institutions at all levels, women are often not or weakly represented (UNDP, 2015). Even when women can participate in meetings and discussions about the management and use of natural resources, their actual decision-making power is limited. This way, women's vital knowledge, role and potential in advancing environmental justice and sustainable development is marginalised or lost.

In our lobby & advocacy work, a gender lens offers an essential benchmark to assess effects and impacts on women and their livelihoods, as it gives visibility to social differentiation. Policies may be beneficial to some groups, but detrimental to others. For example, the conversion of natural forests into large-scale plantations provides profits to large companies and some employment for mostly men, but threatens access to Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), food and clean water of forest communities. The cultivation of soy and palm oil for export markets competes with food production for local and regional markets. Large dams serving the electricity needs of people and industries in and around capital cities threaten fishery resources and water supplies for local communities. Since women play an important role in family farming, food security and water management, all these outside interventions specifically have an

impact on women's livelihoods and therefore on their families and their social position in the community (UN Women Watch, 2009). In fact, the impacts these interventions have on women tend to be a strong indication of the levels of injustice to all groups that have weak economic, social and political positions in their societies.

The same goes for International Financial Institution (IFI) policies, trade and investments. IFIs often require that countries with high debt rates reduce government spending by privatising public utilities and services, often leading to higher prices and not necessary safer provision of these basic needs, like for instance drinking water. This can make women start using unsafe water bodies for drinking water. Similarly, it is women –both as producers, labourers and as consumers- who lose out when export oriented cash crops push out food crops due to international trade and investment agreements, and whose vulnerability increases most as a consequence of large-scale interventions such as plantations, dams, ports and/or mining (e.g. Braun, 2010).

Failing to learn from initiatives over the past decades, new climate finance mechanisms again set out to support large-scale interventions. If these mechanisms would truly take a gender perspective, as they may commit to in their policies, public climate finance should instead be directed towards scalable locally-driven adaptation and mitigation strategies, which are often championed by women (Schalatek, Aguilar, & Granat, 2015). Hence, climate finance provides an opportunity to both address climate change and empower women, and contribute to the transformational change the world needs.

3. Both ENDS commitment in relation to gender equality

Both ENDS recognises that achieving gender equality is a crucial and integral part of achieving environmental justice. Both ENDS therefore commits itself to - progressively - integrate gender in all its work and contribute to the empowerment of women. This means taking into account the differences in rights and responsibilities of women and men in natural resources use and management, empowering women in decision-making structures at all levels, supporting women leadership, and assessing policies, implementation mechanisms and investments on their impacts and benefits for different social groups, notably women and men.

This way, Both ENDS aims to:

- contribute to gender equality, women's empowerment and social justice so women's rights are respected, women's positions are improved and their active participation in environmental decision-making is ensured;
- and consequently contribute to the quality, efficiency and sustainability of our work and that of our partners.

Within our organisation, gender is part of Both ENDS broader diversity policy, which states that everyone is equal and equal opportunities should be given regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, HIV/AIDS status, color, class, ethnicity, disability or location. From this viewpoint, Both ENDS strives to maintain a diverse workforce. Both ENDS sees diversity of staff as an opportunity for the organisation to achieve joint goals from different perspectives, insights and skills.

(Both ENDS labour policy agreement Article 3.9)

4. Commitment in practice

Every commitment requires actions to make an actual difference. Both ENDS sets out to put our commitment into practice in the following ways:

A) INCREMENTAL LEARNING AND CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, we have increased our understanding of the role of gender in our and our partners' work substantially. It has amongst others led to our current GAGGA (Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action, 2016-2020) partnership with FCAM, Mama Cash, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹ Likewise, gender equality is a specific learning focus of the Fair Green and Global Alliance, which is led by Both ENDS.² Through these partnerships, but also in other projects and programmes, we have the ambition to further improve our knowledge and outreach on the role of gender equality in all areas of our work. We will therefore, in close cooperation with partners, gender experts and research institutes broaden our knowledge and practices and take up gender analyses in specific themes (e.g. IFIs, mining, climate finance) and in specific programmes.

These analyses include overviews of existing literature and insights on the link between these themes with gender equality and women's rights and gaps in knowledge and capacities to address these issues. We also prioritise identification and development of illustrative cases of partners, learn from their and our experiences, and assess policies, programmes and projects on impacts on gender relations and social justice. These form the basis of informed capacity building and advocacy strategies.

B) DIRECT EMPOWERMENT AND COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

Both ENDS will promote and support the empowerment of women and enhance women's leadership in decision-making processes on environment and sustainable development. Awareness and expertise on gender issues of ourselves and partners is enhanced through debates, training and joint analyses.

In the coming years, we will proactively broaden our network and look for strong women's organisations or environmental organisations explicitly addressing gender and women's rights issues, who can help us and our partners in broadening our knowledge and practice on gender equality and natural resources management.

C) LOBBY AND ADVOCACY

In Both ENDS's advocacy work, gender is progressively used as a benchmark for macro-micro linkages, i.e. showing the differentiated impacts of policies on women and men. This way, the (lack of) implementation of paper policies become tangible, providing visibility to the impact on women and men in local communities. Ways to address structural inequalities *and* what a gender lens *would* mean for policy development and implementation that support inclusion and sustainability are taken up in our lobby and advocacy work. In the coming years, Both ENDS aims to acquire a strong institutional position on the nexus between gender and environmental justice. At the same time, we will actively advocate and help to secure the financial and political space for organisations working on women's rights and gender equality.

D) FAVORABLE INTERNAL CONDITIONS

Within the organisation, gender is reflected in Both ENDS's aim to ensure gender balance in staff and management, and gender-sensitive working conditions, such as two weeks leave for the non-pregnant partner.

We do not appoint an internal gender focal point, but instead actively support and encourage *all* staff members to integrate gender considerations in its contents related (see above) and day-to-day work, amongst others by:

- Ensuring balance in female and male participants in events organised or supported by Both ENDS
- No participation in meetings with, or calling attention of organisers to, all-male or all-female panels
- Including gender perspectives in cases, publications, policy recommendations and outreach
- Including gender analyses and gender justice actions in project proposals and activities related to donor education.
- Discussing gender issues with partners informally to increase our joint understanding of key challenges, including cultural differences and sensitivities
- Increasing cooperation with groups, movements and organisations working on gender equality and women's rights.

¹ bothends.org/GAGGA

² bothends.org/FGG

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