



## Gender at Work India Feminist Principles and Values

We approach all our work – with UN organisations and small grassroots groups, strategic advice and evaluations, baseline studies or audits, policy and organisational change interventions – with certain feminist principles. These principles, along with the Gender at Work India’s framework, guide the design and implementation of all of the work undertaken using the organisation’s name and reputation. We consider these principles to be an open, diverse, evolving ‘suite’ of possibilities rather than a monolithic, definitive or ‘authoritative’ system. Each of these principles is presented below in a condensed version:

- i. We respect and value each person, we acknowledge one’s own experiences, positions, and perspectives. We value diversity, giving space to multiple voices and stories, we recognise multiple modes of learning. We believe in the potential of each person for reflecting/learning, feeling and doing, developing their own capacity to question, change and transform, connecting with their own and all humanity. Building cultures of equality, inclusion and peace is both an individual and collective journey.
- ii. We challenge patriarchal binaries in our work, and actively seek to explore paradoxes and contradictions. While our brain is trained to identify binaries, reality is often more nuanced and complex, and training ourselves and our partners to challenge binary perceptions is a rich source of learning and change. These binaries include:
  - nature/nurture,
  - mind/body,
  - self/other,
  - private/public,
  - merit/demerit
  - sex/gender
  - personal/professional,
  - old/young,
  - qualitative/quantitative,
  - productive/reproductive,
  - the formal/informal and
  - individual/organisational dimensions of the Gender at Work framework
- iii. An important way we use to challenge binaries is to make connections – between discourses and domains, between local and global, between past, present and future, between people, and between ideas, beliefs, and practices. Another important way we use to challenge binaries is to question received wisdom and accepted orthodoxy, and treating resistance with curiosity and interest as a necessary part of the ‘unlearning’ process. We aim to honour dissent and multiple realities, and support critical reflection.
- iv. Our work addresses differences in power, and different ways in which human beings exercise their power. We aim to make the exercise of power visible and accountable, and to encourage the exercise of power by those who experience powerlessness. We recognise that power is dynamic and situational: the same person can exercise different kinds of power to different degrees depending on time and context. We aim to unpack intersecting hierarchies of power and privilege. Among the kinds of power that we seek to illuminate are positional or ascribed authority and hierarchy, the power of exercising skills and knowledge (power to), self-esteem and confidence (power within), power to set agendas, power with (building collective strength) power to block, and the power of sexuality.
- v. Our work is about ideas and about their effect in the world. We honour materiality by recognising that ideas have consequences. We do this by putting stories at the center of our work, by exploring the difference between ideals and practice, and by being mindful of the knowledge of our bodies, and their healing as we do our work. We practice non-violence. We practice deep listening without judgment.
- vi. We recognise the importance of context: there are no perfect places to start, only real ones. While we use tools, we do not have recipes. The ability to respect the organisations and individuals we work with

and design activities that will address their hopes and their reality is a hallmark of Gender at Work India's approach.

We recognise that power relations and context are permeated by layers of inequality. That is why we use the intersectionality 'lenses' of the class-sexual orientation -race -generation to include and deny any form of oppression.

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