

JPIC 2021 Plan - Gender Equality and Women

Rationale

The situation of women in all parts of the world shows that their rights to a dignified life are not being guaranteed and the reality reflects a huge gap between poverty and growing gender inequality. Although there have been important advances in recent years, addressing gender inequality and understanding the empowerment of women and their rights, remain a fundamental challenge in all regions of the world regarding indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, women with disabilities, elderly, young people, teenagers, girls and women who play a dual role in raising children.

Gender Equality and Gender Equity are the important concepts which can help us qualify the actions of Gender Equality. Studies indicate that Gender equality is a concept that refers to the equal enjoyment of rights, opportunities and resources, regardless of gender. It does not mean that women, men, girls or boys are equal, but that gender cannot be a limiting factor in their lives. Gender equity is considered as a part of the process for us to achieve equality. It refers to the fair distribution of benefits or responsibilities between men and women, according to their differences and respective needs.

The Global Coordinating Group, recognizing how being a Woman is integrated and connected with the whole of reality, decided to change the “emphasis on women's rights and violence against women (SDG 5) to the issue that embraces the concern for water (SDG 6), as women bear the burden of the need to have access to clean water for themselves and their families. Women also bear the effect of poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2), lack of health care (SDG 3), lack of adequate education (SDG 4), inequalities in general (SDG 10) and climate change (SDG 13), among others”. According to the UN "the issue of women's equality is a cross-cutting issue, so women's rights are included in all the important concerns of a particular place.”

Gender-based studies show that nearly half a billion women and girls aged 15 and over are illiterate. And that more girls than boys are dropped out of school. If we consider the poverty faced by women, they are 25% more likely to live in extreme poverty than men in the age group of 25 to 34. As for child marriage, around 12 million girls are married annually before the age of 18 worldwide.

In other words, to remove disparities, a society has to go a long way and work hard so that a society in which women and girls – half of the world's population – are no longer left behind. "Only half is an equal part, and just equal is enough." (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women).

In gender discrimination, the condition of race and class called Intersectionality is implicit. Gender equality is not only one of the 17 proposed Sustainable Development Goals; it is also a pillar on which all others will be achieved. A gender perspective in the implementation and monitoring of the agenda is therefore not just an objective, but a way to address all inequalities, as women and girls are disproportionately and systematically affected by them.

The nine objectives contained in the unfolding of SDG 5 seek to highlight the most relevant dimensions, including themes such as violence, discrimination, recognition of unpaid domestic work, policies to reduce gender inequalities, among others:

1. End discrimination against women and girls. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
2. End all violence against and exploitation of women and girls. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres.
3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage.
4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work.
5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership.
6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
7. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land.
8. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
9. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Many of these issues had their importance defined ten years before the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Declaration and Platform for Action. This document was considered the most advanced and progressive normative framework regarding women's rights. It was the result of the IV World Conference on Women, which took place in 1995, in the city of Beijing, China. Adopted by 189 countries, the declaration identifies 12 critical areas of concern:

1. Growing proportion of women in poverty.
2. Inequality in access to education and training.
3. Inequality in access to health services.
4. Violence against women.
5. Effects of armed conflicts on women.
6. Inequality in terms of participation in economic structures, productive activities and access to resources.
7. Inequality in relation to participation in political power and decision-making bodies.
8. Insufficient institutional mechanisms to promote the advancement of women;
9. Deficiencies in the promotion and protection of women's rights.
10. Stereotyped treatment of issues related to women in the media and the inequality of access to these media.
11. Inequality of participation in decisions about the management of natural resources and the protection of the environment.
12. Need for protection and promotion specifically aimed at girls' rights.

Proposed strategies of the JPIC Commission of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry for 2021:

1. To acquire information, knowledge and training as Sisters, Associates and communities on gender issues.
2. Cultivate the attitudes of listening, dialogue and care in the accompaniment of women who have been harmed in their dignity and rights where our sisters are working in different P/R/M.

3. Media and publications: collaborate with the ICC to publish articles for the CSJournal and the website. Produce documentaries and videos showing the struggles and achievements regarding the empowerment of women in our mission areas of the P/R/M.
4. Encourage and strengthen the women who are working for the protection and overcoming of violence and improving political influence to defend the equal rights and involve themselves in economic, political and legal actions.
5. Involve women in committees and local initiatives to ensure the preservation of the environment and promotion of environmental sustainability, including the generation of income from the reuse of solid waste, according to the guidelines of Laudato Si.

Guiding questions:

1. What is the situation of women in your work place, in your P/R/M?
2. In your P/R/M, what are the biggest challenges regarding gender equality in the light of Justice, peace and integrity of creation? How can we achieve gender equality and empower women and girls?
3. How do our Sisters involve and accompany the women in their mission area?

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