Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research

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Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for IAI Scientific Projects and Capacity Building Activities

Introduction

The Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), at its 28th meeting, adopted Decision XXVIII/6, which *Instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the Executive Council, to develop a policy on gender and IAI projects and activities.* At its 29th meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision XXIX/7, which approved the *Policy,* and also adopted Decision XXIX/8, which states:

The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the SAC and SPAC, to continue to revise the Gender policy on IAI scientific projects and activities during the 2021/2022 intersessional period in light of comments and suggestions made by the Executive Council, Parties and partners for consideration by the 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

In the development of the new *Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy on IAI Scientific Projects and Capacity Building Activities*, the IAI Directorate sought the advice of the IAI Executive Council, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) on the inclusion of comments made by Parties, members of the SAC and the SPAC and others providing advice from the IAI community. Current policies from significant universities, inter-governmental organizations, science funding agencies, and scientific associations were also consulted to expand the pool of knowledge and approaches related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), gender, and science.

This policy aims to ensure EDI, including gender considerations, is mainstreamed in IAI science projects and capacity-building activities and that EDI activities are aligned with those of IAI Parties. This Policy aims to facilitate the full and equitable participation of underrepresented groups in activities of the IAI, particularly those focused on science and capacity building, while also taking into account issues related to gender. Ultimately this Policy aims to support regional efforts to develop the highest quality science and improve the capacity of governments to develop public policy relevant to global change.

Underrepresented groups include, but are not limited to, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority/racialized groups, and members of LGBTQ+ communities.

This policy also establishes a framework that supports the principles adhered to by the IAI on open science and transdisciplinary methodologies, especially with regard to equitable participation by people affected by the project or activity. It notes, in particular, the UNESCO

Recommendation on Open Science[1] which the General Conference of UNESCO adopted at its 41st session, 9 to 24 November 2021 which states:

Acknowledging that open science should not only foster enhanced sharing of scientific knowledge solely among scientific communities but also promote inclusion and exchange of scholarly knowledge from traditionally underrepresented or excluded groups (such as women, minorities, indigenous scholars, scholars from less-advantaged countries, and low-resource languages) and contribute to reducing inequalities in access to scientific development, infrastructures and capabilities among different countries and regions.

Effective implementation of the policy will require commitment and organizational support by the Conference of the Parties, Executive Council, the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Science-Policy Advisory Committee, and the Directorate.

As appropriate, the Gender and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy on IAI Projects and Activities applies to all IAI science, capacity building, open data, science-policy, and other activities. It establishes gender-related objectives, as appropriate, for the IAI Directorate's administration and execution of these activities.

The IAI recognizes the sovereignty of Parties and, therefore, this Policy does not supersede in any manner whatsoever national legislation, policies, and structures. It also acknowledges special needs and requirements as may be requested by donors and grantors.

Rationale

IAI Parties face severe challenges due to global environmental change, which require diverse perspectives to identify viable solutions. Furthermore, there is a vital link between gender, social equity, and climate change[2]. The IAI's science agenda calls for the engagement of diverse stakeholders through transdisciplinary science (TD) across all stages of knowledge production, from research funding, design, implementation, and dissemination.

Reports have highlighted the historical and persistent inequalities and underrepresentation of specific groups in knowledge production and circulation in the Americas region.

In the US, *Women, persons with disabilities, and three racial and ethnic groups—blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians or Alaska Natives—are underrepresented in S&E* [science and engineering][3]. Women are almost half of the workforce but comprise 27.5% of the STEM workforce in the US[4]. While the rate of women researchers in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is markedly better (45.8%) than the global average (30%), women researchers in the LAC region are still underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields at 36%[5].

Women in STEM are less likely to progress to leadership positions in their field, increasing the gender gap among senior scientists and principal investigators (PIs). Women in STEM publish less and are paid less. The reasons include discrimination, family decisions, household

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1 See: https://en.unesco.org/science-sustainable-future/open-science/recommendation

2 Aguilar Revelo, L. 2021. *Gender equality in the midst of climate change: what can the region's machineries for the advancement of women do?*. Gender Affairs series, No. 159 (LC/TS.2021/79), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

3 United States National Science Foundation. 2017. Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering. Washington, D.C. https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17310/digest/introduction.

4 United States. Census Bureau. 2021. *Women are nearly half of U.S. workforce but only 27% of STEM workers*. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/women-making-gains-in-stem-occupations-but-still-underrepresented.html.

5 UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2020. *Women in science*. Fact Sheet No. 60. Paris: France. http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs60-women-in-science-2020-en.pdf

pressures, workplace cultures, and financial considerations, and a lack of effective interventions.[6]

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most economically unequal region of the world. Its inequalities are rooted in colonial history and marked by social constructs of prejudice against racial/ethnic minorities, including indigenous peoples and people of African ancestry. Moreover, inequalities intersect and tend to be deepened for individuals in more than one underrepresented group, for example, black women or women with disabilities.

A literature review on underrepresented groups in STEM undertaken in Canada suggests several challenges related to EDI and science faced by underrepresented groups. The review *Issues and challenges faced by underrepresented groups in engineering and computer science industries* by the University of Victoria and Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster ("the Supercluster") project[7] found that:

Members of underrepresented groups often reported experiencing an unwelcoming climate in STEM programs which negated a positive educational experience and fostering a supportive learning environment. Nondominant groups were more likely to have a lower sense of belonging in STEM fields compared to White male counterparts;

and

The LGBTQ2SAI+ workplace inequalities were pervasive within STEM-related agencies, extend across age cohorts and supervisory status, and exist for both LGBTQ2SAI+-identifying women and men.

The number of women researchers in IAI-supported scientific projects also points to a gender gap and provides additional reasons for adopting a policy on gender. For example, the number of women acting as Principal Investigators in projects under the Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) rounds 2 and 3 and under the Small Grants Projects (SGP-1, SGP-2, SGP-HD, SGP-CRA, and SGP-HW), from 2002 to 2021, totalled 22 out of 75 or 29%. Women researchers acting in all roles, including researchers and Principal Investigators in the above science projects, totalled 194 out of 527 or 36%. The IAI lacks data on its projects and underrepresented groups.

With regard to IAI capacity building activities, namely, the Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program has enrolled 33 female and 13 male fellows from 10 countries in North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. These numbers include participation by science-policy fellows associated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Mitacs Canada. This equitable participation indicates the positive impact of considering issues related to gender.

Women comprised most of the participants at IAI training events, such as training institutes, workshops, seminars, and forums organized by the IAI Directorate in the past years. From 2012-2019, of a total of 906 participants, 467 were female professionals, or 51.5%, in 24 training events. The increase of women participation is due to the Directorate's criteria for the selection of participants, which took into account gender balance resulting in an increase in the number of female applicants.

Data from the second and third iterations of the Seed Grant Program also point to progress in gender balance. For example, in the second iteration of the Program, in 2011-2016, 11 projects were implemented with 4 women as Principal Investigators (PI) compared to 7 male PIs. Additionally, women counted for 26 co-PIs compared to 29 male co-PIs. The gender balance

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[6] Castillo, R., Grazzi, M. & Tacsir, E. 2014. *Women in Science and Technology: What Does the Literature Say?* Technical note no. IDB-TN-637. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.

[7] University of Victoria (Canada) and Canada Digital Technology Supercluster. (2021). *Issues and challenges faced by underrepresented groups in engineering and computer science industries.* Victoria: University of Victoria. https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/issues-and-challenged-faced-by-underrepresented-groups.pdf.

further improved in the Program's third iteration, in 2016-2017, wherein 10 projects there were 5 women PIs compared to 5 male PIs and 24 women co-PIs compared to 13 male co-PIs.

Other IAI capacity building activities, such as the research internship and Directorate internship programs, have had predominant female participation to date: 86% female researchers in the first program, and 67% women interns in the latter.

This policy takes into account and is in alignment with the *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*, the IAI scientific agenda, and the IAI strategic plan. With regard to the IAI strategic plan, a special note was made of Theme I, Goal 1, Objective ii, Action b, which states: *For every call for proposals, the Directorate shall ensure that the peer-review committee is representative in terms of disciplines, regions, and gender balance, and that it includes underrepresented groups in science;* and Theme II, Goal 1, Objective ii which states: *Support research that enhances social-environmental justice, gender equality, and engagement of underrepresented groups from the beginning of the research process.*

Additionally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, Gender equality, Target 5.C., *Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*, provides a framework to anchor the policy alongside global agreements which include elements related to gender and are promoted by and adhered to by IAI Parties. Among international agreements, this policy acknowledges, in particular, the *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women* and the current work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on the draft outline of a gender plan of action for the post-2020 period.

Definitions

Anti-racism
Anti-racism is proactive action or strategies against racism. It recognizes systemic racism and acknowledges privilege and systemic or structural barriers based on race.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
Ensuring and protecting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) involves giving fair treatment and opportunity to all individuals. The aim is to eradicate prejudice and discrimination based on personal characteristics such as age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, among others. Achieving EDI requires embracing and valuing diversity, seeking to create an environment where all individuals are treated respectfully. In this policy, EDI also refers to or includes gender.

Equity
Equity in science and research refers to the removal of systemic barriers and biases; enabling all individuals to have equal opportunity to access and benefit. To achieve this, all individuals who participate in the research ecosystem must develop a strong understanding of the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, racialized minorities, individuals from the LGBTQ2+ community) and put in place impactful measures to address these barriers.

Diversity
Diversity indicates differences in age, sex, sexual orientation, ability, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, and ethnic origin.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are supported and integrated into all phases of the science and research process.

Gender
Gender refers to the roles, characteristics, and behaviours that a given society associates with our identities as women, girls, men, boys, or non-binary people. Gender is socially and culturally constructed and changes over time. Gender influences an individual's expectations, how they relate to others, and the norms they are expected to conform to.

Intersectionality
Intersectionality[8] refers to structural marginalization and disadvantage at the intersection of gender with other social identities and stratifiers such as age, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, and ability, supported or exacerbated by/embedded in the colonial legacy of power relations[9].

Intergenerationality
Intergenerationality relates to age diversity in any given environment and the fostering of interactions among members of different generations

Mainstreaming of EDI
The mainstreaming of EDI includes increasing equitable and inclusive participation of individuals from underrepresented groups in the sciences., including women and individuals with diverse gender, This effort requires special attention and efforts, including all research actors to develop a strong understanding of the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups and to assess and addressing the implications for participants in all planned research activities or projects. Mainstreaming EDI provides a mechanism for highlighting everyone's concerns and experiences as a vital element in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all IAI science, capacity building, science-policy activities.

Objectives and activities

Objective I Promote EDI in science.

The IAI Directorate will strive to exercise leadership in the region by promoting EDI mainstreaming in scientific research, capacity building, science-policy initiatives regionally.

The IAI will partner with relevant international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and research institutions, among others, to promote EDI mainstreaming in science education, post-doctoral research, and publicly-funded scientific research.

The IAI Directorate will seek to increase the leadership of people from underrepresented groups in scientific activities and research funded by the IAI.

Objective II: Mainstreaming EDI in IAI activities

The Directorate will work with the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory (SPAC) to address EDI considerations when submitting recommendations to the Parties regarding SAC and SPAC nominees.

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[8] Crenshaw, K. 1989. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics*. University of Chicago Legal Forum; 12(4).

[9] Akotirene, C. *Interseccionalidade*. São Paulo: Pólen, 2019.

IAI contracts and grant agreements supporting scientific and capacity-building activities will include a clause on the need to achieve EDI of participants and to include analyses of EDI dimensions, as appropriate. EDI should be addressed in proposals and subsequent reports.

The IAI Directorate will encourage project proposals to develop monitoring and evaluating tools for EDI throughout the research process, from design to project development, implementation, and impact.

Training and fellowship programs supported by the IAI, such as the IAI's Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program, will request that Parties and other participants include, as appropriate, EDI considerations in the selection of fellows and mentors. The fostering of intergenerational relations will also be considered to enhance age diversity.

Objective III: Reduce imbalances and biases in project selection and the development of science and capacity building programs

Individuals from underrepresented groups will be encouraged to apply for calls for specific opportunities (e.g., grants, consultancies, fellowships), paying special attention to intersectionality. The IAI will disseminate these opportunities to a broad audience via diverse channels to ensure awareness by underrepresented groups. When possible, accommodation will be made available to applicants to mitigate barriers during the selection process (e.g., to address accessibility requirements).

The IAI Directorate will address EDI throughout the peer review process, especially in the composition of the panel of experts, to select IAI projects and activities. The panel of experts will receive EDI training in advance of their duties to address issues such as unconscious bias.

The IAI will seek to provide research and funding opportunities, subject to the availability of external resources, to individuals from underrepresented groups.

Objective IV: Establish an inclusive environment in scientific research

The IAI Directorate will strive to increase EDI in research teams, including principal investigators, co-investigators, and students.

The IAI Directorate will promote work-life balance in science projects and capacity-building proposals.

The IAI Directorate will manage its grant agreements with the flexibility to accommodate different career paths and work trajectories of grantees, as appropriate. The Directorate will strive to introduce grant period extensions and extra funding, as appropriate, and subject to the availability of external resources, for researchers who need family or medical leave during a funding period.

Objective V: Increasing regional capacities to improve EDI in the sciences

The IAI Directorate will implement practices to support scientists from underrepresented groups by increasing visibility, genuine participation, and recognition at different stages of their careers, specially those who have intersecting protected characteristics.

The IAI Directorate will strive to develop mentoring programs for scientists from underrepresented groups for training for future leadership positions.

The IAI Directorate will include EDI principles in capacity-building activities to increase participants' awareness of existing disparities and the need for equality in science.

The IAI Directorate will develop education and training materials, including online materials, with diverse voices and perspectives to introduce the challenges and best practices in EDI.

Resource implications
Financial support for activities to implement this policy is contingent on the availability of external financial resources.

The IAI Directorate will seek external financial resources from donor Parties, development banks, foundations, and other possible sources to implement the objectives of this policy.

Violation of this Policy
Any form of aggression, including bullying based on protected characteristics, racism, or sexual harassment, will not be tolerated in any IAI activity. It may result in the termination of activities under the contract and/or the termination of financial support for the project.

Whistle-blowers are encouraged to report alleged non-compliance with this policy to the IAI's Executive Director during the development or implementation of the scientific project or capacity-building activity.

Other comments:
Through the IAI's Regional Assessment and other mechanisms, the Directorate will request information from Parties regarding their recommendations to refine the EDI policy and improve its implementation.

All work under the EDI policy must align with the IAI agreement, IAI's strategic plan, and scientific agenda.