

POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of this policy is to direct Kvinna till Kvinna and its staff on how to fulfil its role as a partner. Kvinna till Kvinna's program handbook offers specific guidelines on how this policy is to be implemented.

Partnering with Kvinna till Kvinna in conflict-affected areas

Kvinna till Kvinna is part of the global women's movement and advocates for women's full and effective participation in peace processes and in the development of their societies.

Kvinna till Kvinna supports women in conflict-affected areas. It partners with organisations and women human rights defenders that advance women's human rights and promote non-military conflict resolution. These partnerships often include financial and capacity-building support, and involve the sharing of experience, networking, and joint advocacy efforts.

Partnering with organisations working in their own communities, countries, or regions, Kvinna till Kvinna has a specific commitment to supporting locally owned agendas. Building on existing resources and initiatives are critical foundations for sustainability.

Kvinna till Kvinna conducts its partnerships in solidarity and in its role as a donor. The organisation understands its position of power when it comes to partnership, specifically when it involves financial support. This position entails a responsibility to initiate dialogue between the partners and to act as a transparent and predictable donor.

The solidarity approach employed by Kvinna till Kvinna involves standing by its partners, understanding contextual challenges, and adapting to changes in order to secure results in difficult environments. The transparent and predictable donor approach requires Kvinna till Kvinna to communicate its procedures, expectations, agreement terms and conditions, and the consequences of non-compliance.

Kvinna till Kvinna is committed to seven partnership principles:

1. Shared values and goals
2. Local ownership
3. Predictability and transparency
4. Mutual commitment to learning
5. Defending safe spaces and networking for women human rights' defenders
6. Mutual accountability and anti-corruption
7. Conflict sensitivity.

SEVEN PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES¹

1. Shared values and goals

The universal human rights principles are central to Kvinna till Kvinna.

Kvinna till Kvinna promotes all-encompassing rights for all women based on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and bases its work on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the global Women, Peace and Security Agenda (UN Security Council Resolutions).

Kvinna till Kvinna is also committed to a human rights-based approach to its programming. This is an approach that is based normatively on international human rights standards that analyses inequalities and discriminatory practices, and unjust distribution of power.

Kvinna till Kvinna partnerships are anchored in a shared commitment to human rights principles and a human rights-based approach. Moreover, a mutual appreciation of partners' and Kvinna till Kvinna's goals, values, and strategies creates common ground for collaboration as well as mutual added value.

2. Local ownership

Kvinna till Kvinna believes that when organisations in civil society receive support to realise their own priorities, they become more sustainable and effective. Each partner is an expert on its own context and addresses the rights and concerns of women in this context. Thus, partners need to define their problems, select their priorities, assess their risks, identify their solutions, and set their own agendas. From a rights-based and conflict-sensitivity perspective, Kvinna till Kvinna encourages participatory planning processes.

As partnerships vary in scope, focus, and duration, these agendas are framed as strategies, specific advocacy plans, or project proposals and form the basis of Kvinna till Kvinna's financial and non-financial support. Often, a Kvinna till Kvinna partner organisation works with several other international donors as well. In such cases, it is important that Kvinna till Kvinna coordinates its support with these other parties in order to harmonise requirements and expectations. Failing to do so would risk weakening the organisation it is aiming to strengthen. Where applicable, Kvinna till Kvinna contributes to core support where several donors agree to contribute jointly to a partner organisation's strategy and budget.

Core funding is ambitious. Partner organisations have different strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some have considerable mobilisation capacity, while others may be very effective in organisational systems. Yet others, may work in environments where receiving foreign funding is very challenging due to repressive or fragile governments. Nonetheless, the principle of local ownership remains relevant to Kvinna till Kvinna, as it points

1. Kvinna till Kvinna has developed its Partnership Principles based on a global consultation with partner organisations in all regions (through an external partnership survey) and on experience sharing among Kvinna till Kvinna's staff at a conference in Sigtuna 2016.

out the importance of facilitating the strategic growth of an organisation long-term, and limiting the risk of fragmentation due to differences in donors' requests.

In situations where core support is not considered feasible because of the partner organisation's stage of organisational development for instance, Kvinna till Kvinna may nevertheless invest in the organisation through a combination of institutional and project support with the aim of supporting the strategic development of the organisation and aiming for specific results. In some cases, project support alone may be relevant.

3. Predictability and transparency

The decision to establish a new partnership is taken by means of a transparent process of assessment in relation to selection criteria. Kvinna till Kvinna informs potential partners about this process.

Additionally, Kvinna till Kvinna clearly communicates its requirements for funding as well as its decision-making process on financial support to partner organisations. The idea is that the partner organisation should be afforded the opportunity to develop their own capacity, systems, and routines in order to comply with donor requirements as part of a locally owned, organisational strengthening process, rather than for compliance alone. This is important since the management teams of most civil society organisations have important groups to which they must stay accountable and report to other than their donors. One such group is the partner organisation's rights-holders.

Similarly, for disengagement and responsible phase-out, Kvinna till Kvinna is clear about the circumstances under which a partnership may be ended, and engages early in dialogue with its partner organisations on what would constitute a responsible phase-out.

4. Mutual Commitment to Learning

Committed to women's rights and peace, Kvinna till Kvinna has developed relevant expertise, practical experience, advocacy skills, and networks. More specifically, Kvinna till Kvinna has focused on gender-based violence, women's participation, women's security, human security, and peace-building.

Its commitment to learning is central to Kvinna till Kvinna, and considered a way to deepen the discourse on results while maintaining a strong focus on mutual learning with partners.

This requires creating a space for learning where participants feel confident about sharing their experiences openly. Failures and challenges may be used to identify new and effective ways to adapt activities and achieve desired results.

Kvinna till Kvinna creates this space in a variety of ways. It organises study visits, advocacy trips, networking meetings, and capacity building activities for its partner organisations' representatives and women human rights defenders within its networks.

Kvinna till Kvinna supports partner organisations' own evaluations of their work. Also, Kvinna till Kvinna commissions external evaluations that include assessments of its partner organisations' capacities and work. These all form important inputs to dialogue and mutual learning between Kvinna till Kvinna and its partners.

5. Defending safe space and networking for women human rights' defenders

Women in conflict-affected areas are exposed to the insecurity caused by the conflict. Women human rights defenders also face threats and risks because they speak out on women's rights and challenge stereotypes and power structures.

Kvinna till Kvinna initiates discussions on security and risk assessment with its partner organisations and with women human rights defenders. It also offers needs-based training and networking opportunities.

Kvinna till Kvinna is committed to ensuring the provision of the space and trust required for a safe exchange of experience and dialogue, and reflection on its own protection strategies. By providing safe spaces to meet, exposed women human rights defenders within and across multi-dimensional conflict divides can be supported in strengthening their own security and well-being and challenging isolationist policies and fear.

6. Mutual accountability and anti-corruption

Kvinna till Kvinna trusts its partners to be genuinely interested in their results which aim to create social change for women. Kvinna till Kvinna and its partners are jointly responsible and accountable for delivering results to the rights holders - the women that the partners represent or whose rights they are working to protect and/or promote.

When assessing its partners' internal capacities, systems, and routines, Kvinna till Kvinna takes into account rights holders and the partners' accountability systems that are in place. Kvinna till Kvinna encourages transparency, anti-corruption action plans, and complaint mechanisms for whistleblowing.

Kvinna till Kvinna acts immediately on suspicions of corruption. It defines corruptions as abuse of trust, power, or position that results in improper gain for a person or an organisation.

7. Conflict sensitivity

Kvinna till Kvinna always engages based on a thorough analysis of the context, and takes into account the perspectives of diverse groups. Kvinna till Kvinna strives to have presence in context, for a "finger on the pulse", and for direct interaction with women's organisations from a variety of backgrounds.

Partner selection and relationships are crucial for implementing a conflict-sensitive approach. Kvinna till Kvinna always works with several organisations representing diverse groups, perspectives, and experiences, in order to have a balanced portfolio and prevent any bias (or perceived bias) in conflict-affected areas.

Kvinna till Kvinna never takes sides when a conflict occurs, and aims to provide platforms and spaces for exchange and networking between a range of conflict-affected partner organisations.