**CONCEPT NOTE**

***Feminist Participatory Action Research for Change!***

***Support to Rural, Indigenous, Migrant, Urban Poor Women’s Organisations.***

**“Our Land & Water - Our Life. Our Livelihood. Our Dignity.**

 **Strengthening Feminist Movements for Land Rights and Development Justice”**

**Background**

Access to land and natural resources is increasingly recognised as the strongest poverty eradication measure, a more relevant indicator than dollars per day. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that the extent to which rural women have secure access, use and decision-making control over land and natural resources is significant factors of the level to which they can enjoy their full human rights[[1]](#footnote-0), Women’s control over arable land and other productive resources leads to stronger development outcomes for families and communities, decreased malnutrition, increased food sovereignty, more sustainable farming practices, and evidently can enable women to resist different forms of discrimination and violence they are facing in their daily lives.

However, the situation in Asia and the Pacific in terms of women’s land rights is quite dimmed and encounter increasing threats due to systemic and structural issues. **Neoliberal capitalism** which is driven by economic growth have been a major driver of displacement of women and have led to increased violations of rural, indigenous, urban poor women’s rights. It has shifted rural economies to export-oriented cash crop, enabled multinational agribusiness to monopolise input markets, pushed the aggressive spread of economic zones and massive infrastructure developments, resulting in large scale acquisitions of land, communal forests and water resources by foreign investors. **The new generation of trade and investment agreement** gives more power to agribusiness and corporations to take control over land, forests, seeds, and other productive resources and diminishes the role of the state as duty bearer to provide public services and protect the environment.

This extractive model of development has led to **climate change and climate-induced disasters** that disproportionately impact rural, indigenous, urban poor women and expose them to increased risks of loss of land, livelihood, and exacerbate gender inequalities in their communities. Ironically, many of climate projects and policies offered false solutions that oftentimes displaced women from their land and livelihood rather than ensuring their rights over these. Big “clean energy” projects like geothermal energy, hydropower dams, biofuel plantations forcibly displaced women and men in local communities . Furthermore, projects like REDD+ and other conservation projects that oftentimes were not planned and done in consultation with local communities - including indigenous women - further alienate women from their natural resources and their traditional local knowledge and practices.

In the midst of these increasing threats, **patriarchy** has further denied women’s right to property, land and livelihood including their rights to inheritance, decision making and management over natural resources. In many countries, women’s access to and control over land, water and other productive resources is negatively impacted by patriarchal discriminatory land ownership laws and practices - i.e inheritance, succession, customary, and/or family laws and marriage related practices. The UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practices recently found that “women are more harshly affected by land tenure insecurity due to direct and indirect customary laws and practices at the national, community and family level”.[[2]](#footnote-1)

Lastly, This patriarchal system and governance that relies on the use of power and violence often times uses **military, state forces and even oppressive laws and policies** in the name of development to repress the resistance and struggle of women and men in local communities in defending their land, livelihood and environment.

We believe that ‘development’ is supposed to benefit poor, marginalised women of the global south. They are best able to identify both the problems and solutions. In 2013, APWLD together with rural, indigenous, migrant, urban poor women organisations and civil society in the region made a unified call for **Development Justice.** Development Justice promotes peoples’ rights, dignity, wellbeing and solidarity while addressing the inequalities of wealth, power, and resources between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women.

**APWLD believes in the power of local feminist movement.** We believe that in order to challenge the current development model and to claim women’s land rights, strong movements of rural, indigenous, migrant, fishers, urban poor women are needed. They must be supported to build their capacity to document the impact of loss of land, forests, water and other productive resources on their lives and livelihood, have meaningful engagement in decision making processes in natural resources management, are able to form strong local feminist movements that work with other movements to demand accountability from state and non-state actors, and able to push governments in tackling systemic barriers to women’s land rights and sustainable development.

To address the need to increase the evidence base advocacy and the need to have women as vocal and effective organisers, advocates and campaigners in human rights, APWLD will support 8-10 local organisations to conduct Feminist Participatory Action Research for Change “Our Land and Water: Our Life. Our Livelihood. Our Dignity”

## Why Feminist Participatory Action Research?

APWLD firmly believes that feminist movements, grounded in local struggle and experiences, are the key to making real changes.

Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) is rooted in **movement building**. Through FPAR women collect evidence about what is happening in their communities and collectively take action. FPAR is conducted by and for women. With strong, locally produced research and documented evidence, women challenge rights violation and gendered power imbalances. FPAR is a potent tool for enabling women to take control of development agendas and programmes that are affecting their lives.

**Our FPAR Principles:**

* **Purpose is structural changes**: the purpose of our research is to bring about structural changes that women identify as critical to their enjoyment of human rights
* **Amplifies women’s voices:** the research gives voice to women as the experts and authors of their own lives and policy decisions. It strategically places them as researchers and experts and promotes them into policy dialogue.
* **Owned by the community:** research decisions are made by the community of women who are stakeholders of the research project;
* **Takes an intersectional approach** to identify experiences of discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation**;** recognising the diversity of women’s experiences, identities and power.
* **Aims to shift power:** the research seek to reconstruct traditional power imbalances such as researchers / subject and also aims to challenge and shift gendered source of personal, political and structural power;
* **Fosters movement building / collective action:** the research process itself should be seen as a collective process that strengthens solidarity and empowers women to work collectively for long term structural changes;
* **Build capacity of all:** FPAR always involves capacity building but also recognises that capacity building and learning is a collective, political action of all the actors involved.
* **Free Prior Informed Consent** of all participants is prioritised in FPAR
* **Safety, care and solidarity with participants** is essential.

The community based feminist participatory methodology was used for human rights violation research by rural, indigenous and migrant women in 2012-2013 and in 2015-2017. It facilitates democratic, non-hierarchical mutual learning processes situated in struggle for social transformation. It emphasises local knowledge, shares and develops knowledge and skills based on experiences of participants. It looks at the power relations in our daily lives and society and challenges the gendered power asymmetry which intersects women’s socially/culturally constructed locations and multiple identities.

Our principal purpose of doing FPAR is to change systems and structures to improve the lives of women. We interpret ‘Change’ as ‘Structural Change’ or change to structures and systems of oppression particularly patriarchy and the fusion of patriarchy with globalisation, fundamentalism and militarism. The participants are not objects on whom research is conducted but rather the subjects of the inquiry who set the agenda, participate in the data collection and analysis, and control the use of the outcomes, including deciding what future actions to take or directions to go in**.**

For BOOM FPAR programme 2018-2020, the selection committee of APWLD will select **eight to ten** organisations that together with the community will conduct action research on their chosen topics on the following:

1. The impact of **human rights violations on rural, indigenous, migrant, fisher and urban poor women at the local or country level,** specifically on the following three focus areas of the research that’s illustrative of the systemic barriers to women’s rights to land, water and other productive resources:
	1. **Land, water and resource grabbing** - includes land and water acquisitions by foreign, domestic investors and state for extractive industries and development projects and its’ impact to environment and livelihood, including false solutions of climate change
	2. **Trade and investment agreements** - includes the impact of land, crop, seed and water monopoly by big agribusinesses and other businesses; unsustainable agriculture with the use of GMO and pesticide and and privatisation of public services in relation with natural resources, and
	3. **Patriarchal discriminatory land ownership laws and practices -**  i.e inheritance, succession, customary, and/or family laws and marriage related practices which denies women for property, land ownership and decision making over natural resources management.
2. Community-owned solutions and demand for land rights, sustainable livelihood and development justice.

APWLD will provide eight to ten organisations with a small grant to employ a young woman researcher and carry out the research including salary and on-costs with the approximate amount of USD 12,000. Research partners will need to appoint a mentor to assist this young women researcher throughout this research programme.

APWLD will also support the young women researchers and their mentors to participate in capacity building workshops/trainings and provide advocacy or network opportunities. They will access training in International Human Rights standards and rights-based approach on their area of research. Through a combination of face-to-face and online modules, they will share the frameworks within their communities, learn practical research skills, and by the end of 2019 will have developed and commenced a community-based research plan.

**Overall objective:**

To advance rural, indigenous, migrant and urban poor (RIMUP) women’s human rights in Asia Pacific by increasing their capacity to author evidence-based community research and be vocal and effective policy advocates for human rights and Development Justice, and in particular for their rights on land, water, soil, biodiversity and other productive natural resources.

**Specific objectives:**

* Develop the capacity of RIMUP women and their organisations in 8-10 communities to research and document evidence for use in engaging decision-making processes on human rights in local, national, regional and international level
* Foster knowledge and resources on the impact of development policies, practices and projects on women at the local level, national and regional level;
* Establish strategic advocacy plans and opportunities to support women’s own position and solutions for policy change at national, regional and international levels; and
* Strengthen institutional development of partner organisation through leadership development and movement building.

**Participants**

Training participants will be a group of 16-20 women working from grassroots organisations in the region representing indigenous, rural, migrant and urban poor women.

* 2 participants from each organisation/country will form a team to conduct FPAR on evidence based advocacy using the skill they learn from the training.
* The team should consist of 1 (one) young woman researcher (below the age of 35) and 1 (one) mentor from the partner organisation or APWLD member organisation. It is preferable to have at least one (either mentor or young women researchers) from the community where the FPAR will be conducted)
* Organisation participants should have experience in organisational work and advocacy for women’s rights and commitment to women’s movement.

## Programme Activities

1. **1st Regional Feminist Participatory Action Research Training**

**Methodology and Approach**

Through the training, participants will gain skills and knowledge on the framework of Feminist Development Justice, land rights and Feminist Participatory Action Research. The training particularly encourages young women researchers to build their leadership and foster a generation of women rights advocates. The training will use a simple, clear and participatory methodologies, to ensure that participants to be comfortable in new concepts and issues.

**Expected Outputs**

* Participants understand about the objective, approach, and time frame of Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) 2018-2020.
* Training participants gain skills and capacity on the key concepts on framework feminist participatory approach, human rights based approach, and international HRs framework - particularly on the issue of rights on land, water and natural resources.
* Participating organisations have a more detailed FPAR plans in their respective communities.
* Training participants gain skills and capacity on the tools of Theory of Change, Power Mapping and Critical Pathway to be used together with the community to plan the research and the impact objectives.
1. **Pre-Research Consultation to the Communities**

After the 1st regional training workshop, appointed young women research coordinator will go to their communities for consultation. All FPAR projects should start with community consultations before the research is designed and commenced. There may need to be a series of consultations with various stakeholders. FPAR almost always includes consultations with women in women only space to ensure that discussions of gendered power relations and of issues that may not be easy to speak about in front of men are explored.

The objectives of pre-research community consultations should include:

* Gaining the support, collaboration and ownership of the community / stakeholders
* Forming a research team with community researchers
* Identifying the problem to be the focus of the project
* Designing methods for the research, questions and objectives
* Developing advocacy plans for long term change (on-going throughout research process)

Based on the consultations, the young women coordinators are expected to prepare the draft Research Design and submit to APWLD before the 2nd training.

1. **2nd Regional Training on FPAR Framework and Methodology**

Young women researchers will present the research design and advocacy plan formulated together with the community and will gain inputs from facilitators and other participants. This training will provide skill building and capacity on the FPAR framework and methodology, data analysis and reporting. The training will also build the skill on participatory monitoring and evaluation with the community.

**Expected Outputs**

* Participants gain their capacity on feminism and feminist framework – as a core concept to practise and analyse the research in their respective community.
* Training participants gain skills and capacity on the framework and methodology on feminist participatory action research – including research designs, methods to gather data and participatory data analysis, as well as feminist analysis
* Participants able to self-reflect and refine their evidence-based advocacy plans and strategy, in particular to work with the community to advocates their rights on access to and control over natural resources, decent work and living wage, peace and security and women’s voice and democratic participation in development agenda.
1. **Field Research with the Community**

After the 2nd regional training workshop, appointed young women research coordinator will work with women in the community to gather data/information needed for their advocacy, conduct participatory data analysis as well as conduct capacity building and women organising works in relation with their thematic focus.

At the end of this stage, a zero draft of country research report with preliminary findings and analysis need to be submitted before the 3rd regional training on advocacy and ways forwards.

1. **3rd Regional Training on Advocacy and Ways Forward**

The 3rd regional training will be a mutual learning process where participants’ can share their understanding and experiences on qualitative data analysis, identifying the gaps and challenges, and further improving their research report. The training will reflect the impact of the research, starting from the personal, organisational, and community level. The reflection will discuss on the success stories, best practices, the lesson learnt, the threat and challenges and ways to address these challenges.

Furthermore, the 3rd training will an important venue to discuss the ways forward, including advocacy and campaign strategy, be it in local, national, regional and international level; and also identifying ways to work together sustainably – cross issues, cross countries – to strengthen feminist movement building in the region.

**Expected Outputs**

* Participants able to share their experience on their research, analysing the data, identifying the challenges and ways to address the challenges.
* Participants are able to identify the gaps in their research report and gain concrete recommendations for the improvement of their research report.
* Participants are able to refine their evidence-based advocacy plans and strategy, in particular to work with the community to advocates their rights in the local and national level; and also have a concrete plan with APWLD for advocacy in the regional and international level.
1. **Research and Reporting**

The team will conduct research on their specific focus. Based on the activities conducted,, the team will make an interim narrative and financial report and submit to APWLD for review by April 2019.

The final country report will need to be submitted by October 2019. The country report can be written in any language but English version is expected to be sent to the APWLD secretariat. Guidelines for the final country research report will be discussed and finalised at the training.

The final programme narrative and financial report along with financial receipts will need to be submitted by December 2019.

1. **Advocacy Phase (Additional Sub-Grant)**

APWLD will also provide modest amount of additional sub-grants to BOOM Land FPAR partner organisations that submit advocacy proposal. The 6-months advocacy period will focus on their advocacy work in local and national level, while APWLD will continuously support advocacy opportunities in regional and international forum.

The final narrative and financial report along with financial receipts will need to be submitted by September 2020.

1. **4th Regional Meeting on FPAR: From Personal to Structural Change**

This meeting will provide a chance for young women researchers and mentors, to showcase their research and advocacy result, and also to reflect, self-assess, evaluate and appreciate our journey of FPAR, documenting the changes they have experienced and seen, be it in the personal, organisational, community or structural level.

**Expected Outputs**

* Participants are able to self-reflect on the impact of the research, be it in the personal, organisational, community level.
* Participants able to share their progress of implementing their evidence-based advocacy plans and strategy in the local, regional and international
1. Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 62 Priority Theme: Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls UN-Women, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. OHCHR (2017), UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice, ‘Insecure land rights for women threaten progress on gender equality and sustainable develolpment’ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)