**Concept Note**

**Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)**

**for Migrant Women’s Human Rights 2019-2021**

*Amplifying Voices, Documenting Evidence, Strengthening Migrant Women’s Movements, Organising and Solidarity for Just Migration.*

**Issues faced by women in migration in Asia Pacific**

There are various types of people on the move in Asia Pacific such as labour migrants, refugees, trafficked persons, smuggled migrants and asylum seekers. However, the type that dominates migration in the region is temporary labour migration regulated and processed by governments. Migrant workers in low-skill and low-status sectors such as agriculture, construction and domestic work makes up the largest migration type in the region.[[1]](#footnote-0) Women constitute majority of workers in health, care services including health and domestic work. Temporary labour migration, although regulated by governments, is mainly carried out by private recruitment and employment agencies. Such migration manifests in forms of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries. Labour migration also exists in irregular channels especially when countries impose bans on MoU due to labour abuses, resulting in migrants resorting to smuggling or other means.

**Migrant women in precarious and slavery-like employment**

Despite international mechanisms and national laws and regulations protecting the rights of migrant workers, migrants’ rights violation and abuses often take place throughout all stages of migration. As migrant labour recruitment and remittances-related financial transaction have become multi-million US dollar business, the labour-export policies are promoted heavily by both governments and recruitment agencies. Regardless of being informed of the risks for their migration, migrants often experience abuse at this stage by having to pay exorbitant fees or facing other fraudulent practices by the agencies, leaving them and families in high amount of debts even before migrating. This is the reality of migrants in the region, i.e. no other option than to migrate to sustain their and families’ lives.

Once they arrive to the receiving countries, often their documents are confiscated with the agencies or employers as bargaining chips to ensure that workers do not leave or make complaints before the contract period ends. As most of them are concentrated in informal and low-valued sectors, temporary and seasonal migrants workers are often underpaid and face horrendous working and living conditions. Lack of robust labour inspection in informal sectors often aggravates such conditions. In most countries in Asia, migrant workers do not have the legal right to form labour unions although they may join one. Many fall into situation of debt bondage, forced labour, or trafficking.

As various immigration laws, policies and practices give asymmetrical power to employers, access to justice for migrant workers remains a big challenge in the region especially the right to redress and compensation. Women migrants additionally face sexual violence throughout stages of migration including at the workplace, especially in domestic work where the women workers are isolated from the public.

**Women in the context of climate-induced migration**

Climate change and its disproportionate impact on women and girls are well documented due to unequal power, access to resource, and distribution of care work.[[2]](#footnote-1) Displaced women and girls also face higher risks of being smuggled, trafficked and sexual violence whether they are displaced due to extreme weather events or slow onset climate change.[[3]](#footnote-2)

Climate change is one of the key drivers pushing people to migrate, especially in the areas of low–lying coastal cities and mega–deltas in countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. Small–island, low–lying states, such as Tuvalu, the Maldives and Kiribati, may be lost to sea level rise, rendering their inhabitants stateless. As the threats to the people’s livelihoods on the islands are increasing, various adaptation strategies including temporary labour migration were presented as a viable adaptation strategy, while failing to guarantee rights and protection of the migrants.

**Discrimination, rights violations and trafficking in marriage migrants**

Marriage migration combines women migrants’ various gendered labour roles – cleaners, nannies, sex workers – into one.[[4]](#footnote-3) Some women who otherwise face barriers to migrating for work might assess marriage migration as a viable option. Substantial number of marriage migrants face the issues of having their visa status tied to their marriage, which could result in their deportation or separation from their children once their marriage end; or even to their capacity as a free person to make a free and informed choice to end their marriage at their will.

Marriage migrations that constitute human rights abuses is an area that has been considered mostly through the lens of trafficking in persons. They manifest in forms of sham marriages and forced marriages.[[5]](#footnote-4) In the former, a would–be migrant is offered marriage as a route to secure residency papers usually for countries in the global north. This may lead in to situations of trafficking in persons or other human rights abuses. Other documented cases are clearer cases of forced marriages, including where the individual thinks they are migrating for work only to learn on arrival in the country of destination that they are expected to get married.

**Our responses**

Despite such challenges, women migrants have stood up and demanded justice by organising, campaigning and advocating for change. They have formed groups providing legal aid, shelters, and solidarity for fellow migrants and built movements to demand policies to the sending and receiving countries to respond to their needs.

As a way to support the organising efforts of women migrants to respond to their challenges, APWLD is conducting Feminist Participatory Action Research for migrant women’s human rights (Migration FPAR)in 2019-2021. The Migration FPAR will take place over the course of 1.5 years and consist of three regional trainings that will allow participants to conduct research projects that relates to their constituencies’ needs, use findings for advocacy and build movements.

APWLD’s previous FPAR that included issues on women and migration:

* Regional Initiative for Tribal Empowerment and Solidarity (RITES) [conducted FPAR in 2015-2016](http://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2017-BOOM-RIW-FPAR-Regional-Report.pdf) in the eastern state of Odisha with members of the Bonda tribal group. RITES together with young migrant women in nine villages investigated the impact of distress migration on women and girls as well as drivers of Bonda women’s migration. They built the capacity of the women villagers to hold the authorities accountable and speak out about the policies regarding the livelihood of the Bonda people.
* The TransAsia Sisters Association (TASAT) [conducted FPAR in 2015-2016](http://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2017-BOOM-RIW-FPAR-Regional-Report.pdf) in Northern and central parts of Taiwan with immigrant women living in Taiwan as well as with the Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants (AHRLIM). Through FPAR, they examined the discrimination against migrant spouses posed by the Taiwan Nationality Law and campaigned for reforms of the law.
* the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency (LNWDA) [led FPAR in 2012-2014](http://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CJ-FPAR-regionalreport.pdf) on the mass displacement of the Carteret Islanders of Papua New Guinea. LNWDA collected data on the effects of climate change and the climate induced displacement on the lives of women in the resettlement communities. LNWDA aided the women to engage with the Papua New Guinean government in decisions regarding its relocation plan created in 2003, as well as future climate related policies and laws.

**Focus area for the research:**

1. **Women migrants workers’ rights** including Decent Work, living wage, rights to organise, and domestic workers’ rights;
2. **Access to justice** for people on the move including domestic workers, trafficked persons, marriage migrants, refugees, climate-induced migrants. The area can cover, for example, immigration policies, criminal justice system, gender-based violence.

**Why Feminist Participatory Action Research?**

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

FPAR is rooted in **movement building**. FPAR uses methods that support APWLD’s aims to support and grow women’s rights movements, advance women’s human rights and Development Justice. FPAR creates new forms of collaborative relationships essential to empower women and to amplify their voices and foster agency. FPAR is a political choice (as is all research) that starts with the belief that knowledge, data and expertise is gendered, has been constructed to create privileged authorities and that women have existing expertise that should frame policy decision making. 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.

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| **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. |

FPAR 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 globalization, fundamentalisms 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**.**

APWLD will provide six to eight 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 8,000-10,000. 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 researcher and their mentors to participate in capacity building workshops 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 developed a community-based research plan.

**Overall objective**

To advance migrant women’s human rights and migrant movements in Asia Pacific by increasing their capacity to author evidence-based community research and be vocal and effective policy advocates for women’s human rights and Development Justice.

**Specific objectives**

* Develop the capacity of women migrants and their organisations to research and document evidence for use in engaging decision-making processes on migrant women’s rights at local, national, regional and international levels;
* Foster knowledge and resources on violation of women migrants’ human rights at the local, national, regional and international levels;
* Establish strategic advocacy plans and opportunities to share evidence-based results and support women’s own positions 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**

* Six to eight (women) grassroots migrants’ rights organisations in Asia Pacific.
* Two 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 one young woman researcher and one mentor – **one of them must be from the migrants community involved in the research**.
* Organisation participants should have experience in organisational work and advocacy for women’s human rights and commitment to women’s movements.

**Programme activities**

**A.** **1st Regional Feminist Participatory Action Research Training on migrant women’s human rights**

**Methodology and approach**

Through the 1st regional training, participants will gain skills and knowledge on the framework of migrants rights and human rights, feminist analysis of law, feminist development justice and feminist participatory action research. The training particularly encourages young women researcher 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 timeframe of Feminist Participatory Action Research for migrant women’s human rights 2019-2021;

· Training participants gain skills and capacity on the key concepts on framework feminist participatory approach, human rights based approach, international human rights and migrants rights framework, feminist analysis of law, and Development Justice

· Participating organisations have a more detailed research plans for research 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.

**B.** **Pre-research consultation to the migrants community**

After the 1st regional training workshop, appointed young women researchers will go to their constituency for consultation. All FPAR projects should start with consultation at their workplace/community before the research has been designed and commences. 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 researchers from the constituency;
* 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 (ongoing throughout research process).

Based on the consultations, the young women researchers are expected to prepare the draft Research Design and submit to APWLD.

**C.** **2nd Regional Training on Feminist Participatory Action Research on migrant women’s human rights: research design and analysis**

Young women researchers will present the Research Design and advocacy plan formulated together with the workers at their workplace, and will gain inputs from facilitators and other participants. This training will provide skill building and capacity on the framework and methodology on Feminist Participatory Action Research, 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 workplace;
* Participants gain skills and capacity on the framework and methodology on feminist participatory action research – including research designs, methods and feminist analysis;
* Participants are able to self-reflect and refine their evidence-based advocacy plans and strategy, in particular to work with their constituency to advocate for migrants rights and Development Justice.

**D.** **3rd Regional Training on Feminist Participatory Action Research on migrant women’s human rights: reflections and ways forward for advocacy**

The 3rd regional training will be a mutual learning process where participants’ can share their understanding and experiences on qualitative data analysing, 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 be 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 and migrants movement building in the region.

**Expected outputs**

* Participants gain their capacity and skill on data analysis, particularly qualitative data analysis and able to share their experience on 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 workers to advocates their human rights in the local and national level; and also have a concrete plan with APWLD for advocacy in the regional and international level.
* a final research report, as a result of the entire process, which can be shared to others.

**E.** **Research, reporting and advocacy**

The country team will conduct research on their specific focus. General time frame for the research production will be from June 2019 - August 2020. Based on the data and information collected, the team will make an interim report and submitted to APWLD for review by May 2020.

The final narrative and financial report along with financial receipts will need to be submitted at the latest August 2020. 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 six-month advocacy period will begin from September 2020 as an optional period when partner organisations are encouraged to submit their advocacy proposals indicating their national advocacy plans based on their research findings. Small amount of grants will be provided for the organisations to conduct national advocacy and campaigns based on their FPAR.

There will be a final FPAR evaluation meeting after the advocacy period finishes approximately in March 2021.

**Timeline and process**

**Call for applications**: 1 April-12 May 2019

**Selection process**: May 2019

**1st Regional Training**: July 2019

**2nd Regional Training**: November 2019

**3rd Regional Training**: May 2020

**Evaluation meeting:** March 2021

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|  | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Items/months | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Call for application |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Selection |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Training module development |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finalising contracts |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| First tranche  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  First regional training |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Research design report due |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Second regional training |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Second tranche  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interim narrative and financial report due |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Third regional training |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| First draft - final report |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Final narrative and financial report due |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Closing of contracts and final tranche  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Advocacy period |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluation meeting |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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2. http://www.grida.no/publications/198 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mecc\_infosheet\_climate\_change\_nexus.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
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5. ILO. 2017. *Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage*. International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, 2017, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\_575479.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)