

Gender Equality and Diversity Policy



Last Updated: 8 June 2026



Registered Charity



Vanni Hope (ABN: 19614675231) is a charity registered with the ACNC.

Introduction

The intention of Vanni Hope's Gender Equality and Diversity Policy (the Policy) is to set out the policies and procedures in place to ensure that Vanni Hope adheres to principles of fostering and maintaining gender equality and a sense of diversity and inclusiveness.

We aim to ensure that equal opportunities and respect are afforded to Vanni Hope members, volunteers and partners regardless of gender, age, ability, marital status, race, religion or sexual orientation. In many countries, including Sri Lanka, there exist different forms of gender-based discrimination and unequal distribution of power between women and men, girls and boys, along with exclusion based on multiple other factors such as race, caste, language and religion. Vanni Hope intends to help eliminate such forms of discrimination in implementing its projects.

We want to help address the root causes of discrimination and inequity in Sri Lanka through our work, which is why our projects are targeted at helping some of the most marginalised communities in Sri Lanka.

This Policy has been developed in accordance with applicable Australian legislation, including the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) and the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth).

Scope

This commitment to gender equality and diversity inclusiveness extends to all persons of concern to Vanni Hope and applies to all operations of the organisation. This includes all staff, board members, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and funded partner organisations.

Gender Equality

Vanni Hope has taken and will continue to take steps to empower women and advance gender equality. In Sri Lanka, women are generally subject to lower pay than their male counterparts, social biases and childcare responsibilities which dissuade and at times constrain women from participating in the workforce. Furthermore, in certain parts of Sri Lanka which have been detrimentally impacted by the civil war (1983-2009) where women have lost male partners, siblings or fathers who were the primary breadwinner and have childcare responsibilities as the sole parent, such female-headed families have lost assets and suffer mental health issues. Our projects and activities (among other things) aim to assist female-headed families and give them the opportunity to maintain a sustainable livelihood to provide for their families and allow their children to attend school systematically and continuously.

Steps taken to ensure Gender Equality and Diversity Inclusiveness

1. The board of directors at Vanni Hope is diverse in terms of gender, age and experience. Vanni Hope welcomes diversity to its governance structures, therefore ensuring a broad range of perspectives in its decision-making process. In its appointment of members of the governing bodies, Vanni Hope will not discriminate in any way against people because of their political or religious beliefs, provided these are compatible with its vision and mission.
2. All activities and practices will take age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, caste, education, sexual orientation, political and religious beliefs, disability and skillset into account wherever relevant.
3. Vanni Hope acknowledges that part of ensuring gender equality is taking steps to mitigate against sexual harassment and misogynistic behaviour. We provide further detail on fostering a gender-sensitive workplace that is safe and protects against discrimination and harassment in the workplace in our Safeguarding Policy.
4. Vanni Hope will ensure that all fundraising, advocacy and communications respect and uphold our commitment to gender diversity and inclusiveness regardless of race, language or religion. Vanni Hope will also ensure that its members and partners are respectful and use inclusive and positive language with respect to other members of the organisation and those connected or benefiting from the organisation. The members of Vanni Hope will not subscribe to any pre-conceived images or stereotypes, with particular attention to stereotypes based on gender and race.
5. Vanni Hope will provide resources to support and enable diversity and inclusion in the operations of the organisation, where reasonably possible. As part of any project or program, Vanni Hope will identify any specific barriers to participation for certain individuals and will develop feasible tailored strategies to overcome such marginalisation and improve their opportunities and ability for social and economic participation in their communities.
6. Vanni Hope also understands that certain individuals who work with or for Vanni Hope wish to keep some of their attributes confidential. All information will be treated in a respectful, professional and confidential manner by Vanni Hope in accordance with the organisation's Privacy Policy.
7. All project proposals incorporate gender analysis, including analysis of gender barriers and, where possible, data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant diversity factors.
8. In Vanni Hope's planning and decision-making, we incorporate the experience of the marginalised who are impacted or are beneficiaries of our work. We are committed to racial, linguistic and religious inclusion in all operational areas of the organisation. Vanni Hope affirms that all adults and children regardless of race, language or religion have the same and equal rights.
9. Where Vanni Hope enters into formal partnerships, relevant gender equality and diversity obligations under this Policy will be reflected in the relevant Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or partnership agreement.
10. Vanni Hope members and our partner organisations will be encouraged to use best efforts to ensure that women and marginalised groups are involved in project decision-making at all stages of the project cycle. Vanni Hope works with partner organisations who share our

understanding and commitment to gender equality and diversity inclusiveness and support us, and our beneficiaries mitigate against gender or diversity-related discrimination. A strong factor in determining who we partner with will be driven by such prospective partner organisation's commitment to gender diversity and diversity inclusiveness generally. Vanni Hope will also assist partner organisations in assessing and building their own understanding of, and capacity to implement gender diversity and diversity inclusiveness in their operations.

11. Wherever possible, data collected for purposes of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation will be disaggregated by age, gender and other diversity considerations where contextually appropriate. Vanni Hope seeks input from experts and other community-based organisations to identify best practice and solutions for achieving equality and inclusion.
12. Vanni Hope embeds in its projects and programs specific gender and/or other diversity inclusiveness principles at all stages of the project / program cycle. Specifically, Vanni Hope will assess how the projects in their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are inclusive, take into account the needs of marginalised people, do not discriminate against them, and do not reinforce inequalities and barriers to inclusion.
13. As noted above, Vanni Hope will develop targeted activities where possible to address the specific needs of women, girls and other marginalised groups and help alleviate structural and historical disadvantage and discrimination against females.

Ongoing monitoring of adherence to the steps in this Policy

In any project plan, Vanni Hope will monitor and evaluate whether the steps above have been undertaken to ensure (within reason) that there has been no gender, racial or religious discrimination with respect to its projects, programs and operations.

As part of its evaluative process, Vanni Hope will also discuss the processes and procedures set out in this Policy with staff members, partner organisations and relevant stakeholders.

Accountability

Vanni Hope provides locally appropriate and confidential avenues for people to provide feedback and raise concerns or complaints about Vanni Hope's staff, volunteers, or partner organisations with respect to Vanni Hope's commitment to gender, racial and religious inclusivity. For further details on how to report complaints about Vanni Hope to Vanni Hope itself, please refer to our Complaints Handling and Whistleblowing Policy.

We periodically assess the practices of Vanni Hope and its commitment to gender diversity and inclusiveness generally. We incorporate those lessons learnt from previous practices and/or through complaints and factor that into our future strategy design and operations.

The Managing Director is responsible for implementing this Policy and will report annually to the Board of Directors on compliance, incidents, and any proposed updates.



This Policy will be reviewed once every two years to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

Date	Version	Review Description	Reviewed by	Approved by
Feb 2025	1	New template created	Virosh Poologasundaram	Board of Directors
June 2026	2	Complete reformat and general update of policy	Abinaja Yogarajah	Board of Directors