

PROUT Convention Gender-equity Policy

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Introduction: Background for the PROUT Convention Gender-Equity Policy

Why a gender policy?

Within Prout conferences and conventions, disproportionately more men than women have participated as plenary speakers, as workshop conductors or as panellists. This, we believe, is the outcome of widespread and generally unintended bias. It is unfair, it hinders development of all aspects of Prout activity, including internal and external education, research, community development, social and economic projects and it is discouraging to those new to Prout having a desire to actively participate in promoting Prout. It also diminishes our credibility with other progressive movements. Overcoming such bias involves not just awareness but positive action.

Background of experience – If we look at the past conventions (prior to 2017), all have been organized and managed almost exclusively by men. Although there have always been women contributing to the organizing, the dominant roles have been men and the women's roles have been subordinated.

Current context – This is 2017 and the program planning committee needed to reflect the current events, which followed the millions participating in the Women's Marches around the world for respect, love, and equity for all marginalized groups. This year's program planning committee is balanced with three men and three women. This need became very apparent in contentious discussions leading up to selecting the committee. The need for a clear and published gender-equity policy for future Prout conventions became evident.

What are the advantages of having a gender policy?

- To demonstrate the principle of coordinated cooperation creating an atmosphere of free minds positively interacting so that no one should be subordinated.
- To give much needed diversity to meetings as well as aiding the visibility of women, as well as people of other gender identities, which is crucial for their ongoing contribution to Prout activities and provides valuable role models for the youth.
- To increase the diversity of thought in our community we need to bring forward more women's views on the issues and make the entire convention more balanced in all aspects.
- To avoid contentious discussions that can become divisive.
- That this gender policy can serve as a point of reference for other activities within our global Prout community.
- To provide a point of reference for establishing policies, procedures, and practices, within our Prout organizations.

Gender-Equity Policy for PROUT Conventions

The PROUT Convention strives to achieve gender balance in all aspects of the gathering. The organizers will endeavour to achieve this balance through equitable gender representation on the organizing and program planning committees and as session chairs/facilitators, as well as through the selection of the overall theme, session proposals and personal invitations to high quality speakers or poster presenters of all genders in line with the gender balance in our community.

Specifically, the PROUT Convention commits to fulfilling gender balance targets in the following areas:

Gender-balanced Organising Bodies

Having gender-balanced organising bodies is beneficial for dynamism, bringing in more diversity of thought and focus on issues that are of high relevance to all genders. Further, it is internationally recognised that a better gender balance among conference planners is generally associated with a better gender balance among speakers. For example, women organisers function as role models and can therefore encourage other women to contribute more to PROUT Conventions.

Policy:

No single gender should make up more than 60% of the overall organising committee, the program planning committee, or related advisory boards.

Speaker Policy

When a space is traditionally occupied more by men, women will often not feel as welcome to step forward and offer their contributions and need more encouragement to share their knowledge and talents to the community

The Convention should therefore strive for gender-balance a) in terms of overall speakers and session chairs, and b) in individual sessions where there are more than 2 speakers, for example preventing the occurrence of all-male panel discussions.

Policy:

No single gender should make up more than 60% of the total number of speakers at the Convention.

No single gender should make up more than 75% on any given panel or in individual sessions with 3 or more speakers (including the chair/facilitators).

A Family Friendly event

Women often have primary caring responsibility for children. This can limit their ability to travel and to attend conferences. Making the event as family friendly as possible, for example through having good child care, supports gender-equity by supporting mothers (as well as fathers) to attend the convention and, while there, to contribute to and participate in the program.

Policy:

The PROUT Convention commits to being a family friendly event that supports parents to attend the convention and to contribute to and participate in the program by

- providing inspiring children's programs for all ages of children and youth
- developing more adequate family friendly accommodation

Reporting Data on Gender-balance

Collecting and reporting data on gender-equity is important in order to make transparent progress in this area.

It also has the purpose of making visible the difference that having such a policy can make.

Policy:

Organisers will publicise the convention policy on gender equity and publicly report data on the gender-balance at past and present conventions (attendees, organisers, session chairs and speakers).

An Inclusive Event

The PROUT Convention is an inclusive event. The participation and contribution of everyone as speakers or in organising bodies is welcome and equally valued, regardless of age, race, gender or sexual orientation.

Adoption of the Policy

A draft of this policy was open for input from 14-22 July, and this final revised version was adopted on 23 July 2017 at the 2017 PROUT Convention in Vig, Denmark.