

UEM Code of Conduct (CoC) against Discrimination and Racism

1. PREAMBLE

“The United Evangelical Mission – Communion of Churches in three Continents is founded on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and serves the purpose of co-operation in mission. It operates within a network of churches in Africa, Asia, Europe and wherever it is called to be.

Together, the members proclaim Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of all people and meet the present-day missionary challenges.

In a world torn apart, the members commit themselves to remain members of the one Body of Christ, and therefore to:

- grow together into a worshipping, learning and serving community,
- share gifts, insights and responsibilities,
- call all people to repentance and new life, and
- bear witness to the Kingdom of God in striving for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.”

2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The UEM is rooted in the Christian understanding of mutual respect and appreciation, which is exemplified in all of humanity that is made in the image of God. This is the basis of the identity of the UEM and its efforts to combat injustice, discrimination and racism. Hence, the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) undertakes to take structural measures to identify and actively combat every form of prejudice, stereotypes or discriminatory and racist attitudes, thoughts and actions that are contrary to our conviction that all human beings are equal before God.

Based on the commitment of all Members of the UEM Communion of Churches to strive for justice and peace as expressed in the UEM Constitution §2, the UEM voluntarily undertakes to recognise this Code of Practice (hereafter referred to as the Code) as a guideline for its attitudes, plans and working practices.

3. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to the UEM as a legal entity, as well as to its staff members, volunteers, the members of its governing bodies and participants of UEM events and activities. This also includes persons, who, although they have no employment contract, are involved in the working organisation and bound by the corporate identity (instructions) of the UEM.

Member churches shall be encouraged to implement the principles and objectives of this code of conduct in their own context.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. Discrimination

Discrimination is the unequal treatment of a person on any ground whatsoever, where there is no objective ground to justify such unequal treatment.

The term discrimination includes direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment and sexual harassment.

4.2. Direct discrimination

When a person is treated less favourably than how another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on one of the grounds for discrimination covered by the law.

4.3. Indirect discrimination

When an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice places a person at a particular disadvantage compared to another person on a ground covered by the law, this would amount to indirect discrimination unless the provision, criterion or practice in question is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and where the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

4.4. Harassment (including stalking and bullying)

When unwanted conduct related to a ground for discrimination covered by the law has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person concerned and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

In particular, these include stalking and bullying.

Stalking refers to the intended and repeated pursuit, pestering or harassing of a person so that their lifestyle is seriously impaired or their safety threatened.

Bullying is systematic and repeated hostility, harassment and exclusion of a person with the intention or consequence that the person being bullied is insecure, degraded and excluded from the working environment.

4.5. Racial Discrimination

The term "racial discrimination" refers to any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on "race", colour, descent, or on national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment of, or equitable right to exercise, human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

The UEM considers racism to be a specific form of discrimination – manifested in wide-ranging ways, both open and concealed – which has a long history and influences attitudes, actions, political developments and systems. It requires special and urgent attention.

4.6. Sexualised discrimination, harassment and violence

In accordance with these guidelines, conduct and actions shall be deemed to constitute sexualised discrimination,

harassment and violence (physical and non-physical force used against another person, including efforts to restrain or prevent free action,) where the purpose or outcome is to force a person to commit unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which violates the dignity of the person concerned, particularly where it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

This can be manifested in different ways: verbally, non-verbally or through physical assault; in particular through remarks of a sexual nature, such as sexually degrading language or gestures, through showing or presenting unwanted obscene, sexually degrading or pornographic representations (e.g. graffiti), through unwanted sexual acts or requests and, in particular, through physical contact of a sexual nature. This can also happen through phobic behaviour against a person's sexual orientation or identification. There is no conclusive definition of sexualised discrimination, harassment and violence. The affected persons themselves decide on the specific demarcation in the particular context.

5. AIMS

The aims of this Code are:

- to prevent and actively fight discrimination, harassment, violence and racism,
- to anchor the idea of human respect in the self-conception of the UEM and ensure that this idea becomes the personal concern of all UEM stakeholders,
- to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive environment within UEM workplaces as well as in all meetings, events and activities conducted under the responsibility of the UEM,
- to ensure that points of contact, procedures and possible consequences are in place in the event of conflict, and
- to advocate against discrimination and racism.

6. DUTIES OF THE UEM AND RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISORS

6.1. The UEM disapproves of all forms of discrimination, harassment and violence. It undertakes to use all means at its disposal to protect its members and all persons involved in the working organisation and bound by the instructions of the UEM against such conduct by other members and persons, who are involved in the working organisation and bound by the instructions of the UEM. To this end, for example, the UEM runs information events and training courses.

6.2. The UEM ensures that governing structures, working-processes and practices – as well as the behaviour of individuals – within the UEM comply with this Code.

6.3. The UEM promotes and supports the efforts of all members by:

- promoting truly inclusive and diverse forms of worship,

- promoting inclusive practices in all areas of the churches' work and ministries,
- engaging in theological reflection and research,
- supporting and promoting transcultural, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist research, also through innovative inclusive forms, and by
- participating in advocacy and lobby work.

6.4. Position and mandate holders in the UEM with personnel responsibility and/or management and training functions have a duty to contribute – through their own conduct and implementation of appropriate preventive measures – to the promotion of respectful and non-discriminatory interaction with one another and respect for the integrity of all members. In the event of complaints relating to, and indications of cases of, discrimination, harassment, bullying, stalking or violence, they must follow the appropriate complaint procedures (8.2., cf. separate sheet) and provide counselling and support to those affected.

6.5. All new UEM personnel, regardless of whether they are on short-term or long-term contracts, are required to sign a copy of this Code upon assumption of their working duties.

7. FIELDS OF ACTION

7.1. Ensuring just, equal and fair treatment of any person by:

- regularly monitoring UEM working practice and reporting every three years to the UEM Council,
- tasking the UEM Ombudspersons and their working-structures to cover this field,
- regularly offering training and reflection for employees and for/with members, and by
- empowering and enabling members of staff through training and awareness building to make use of the Code in the event of possible harassments.

7.2. Fostering civil societyies' fight against discrimination and racism on different levels by:

- offering awareness raising and training,
- joining other organisations, and by
- engaging in political discourse and public action.

7.3. Furthering and supporting research into, and collecting/distributing information and knowledge about, the roots and phenomena of discrimination and racism by:

- awarding scholarships and project funds for this purpose,
- integrating the issue into educational and training programmes, and by
- co-operating with other organisations and faith-based institutions.

8. CONSULTATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

8.1. Points of contact

Persons, who are discriminated against or harassed or who have experienced violence, are encouraged to contact one of the following points of contact within the UEM:

- supervisors, UEM staff with personnel responsibility,
- employee representation, Ombudspersons, UEM Council Members.

In addition, affected persons can also consult external persons, who can provide professional assistance in their specific context.

The affected person then decides what action is to be taken in accordance with the Code.

In order for proceedings to be initiated, the complaint must be in writing. Where a complaint is made orally, it is reproduced and presented in written form. It must include the following information: type, date and place of the incident, persons involved (where applicable), witnesses (where applicable), evidence (where applicable), the signature of the affected person and the written mandate to pursue the case.

8.2. Complaints procedure

8.2.1. For the procedure to be initiated, the written complaint must be submitted to a member of the UEM Management Team chosen by the complainant. In addition, the mandate must be given to pursue the case in the interests of the victim. If none of the board members have the trust of the victim, a council member can also be mandated accordingly. We would encourage anyone concerned to report complaints or concerns at the earliest possibility to ensure that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Thus, while no fixed reporting period has been stipulated, early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

8.2.2. The mandated person is obliged to contact the accused person/people within a period of four weeks. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant information.

8.2.3. The mandated person may seek external advice where this is required.

8.2.4. The mandated person is required to maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

8.2.5. Where allegations are proven, the mandated person is obliged to report the facts to the General Secretary or

his/her deputies. If these persons are involved in the case concerned, the UEM Moderator or one of his/her deputies must be informed.

8.2.6. Where allegations are proven, the case must be reported to the competent authorities (internal and external). In addition, the Management Team and the Council must be informed in writing.

8.2.7. Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include training, referral to counselling or such disciplinary action as a warning, reprimand, withholding promotion/pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, termination of contract or exclusion from meetings and reporting to the respective member church, as deemed appropriate under the particular circumstances.

8.2.8. We encourage affected person to report in all circumstances: However, false and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation (as opposed to complaints that, even when they are erroneous, are made in good faith) may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

9. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Members of the UEM, who violate the principles and objectives of the Code and fail to perform their obligations, may be suspended, pursuant to §4 (5) of the UEM Constitution or, in the event of persistent violations, may be expelled from the UEM pursuant to §4 (6) of the UEM Constitution. (cf. Procedures).

10. FURTHER MEASURES

10.1. Information about the Code: the UEM shall make this Code available to all members of committees, all UEM members, mandate holders and members of staff.

10.2. Contractual relationships: this Code shall be applied to all contractual relationships of the UEM and/or UEM members as far as UEM resources and activities are concerned. Members of staff shall be trained in the content and importance of the Code.

10.3. Mandatory reporting, evaluation: in close co-operation with the ombudspersons, the UEM undertakes to evaluate the implementation of this Code at regular intervals and to submit a report to the Council every three years.

11. FINAL PROVISION

This Code cannot cover all relevant situations. In each case, an independent decision must be taken by members and/or UEM leading bodies to maintain integrity and combat and prevent discrimination and racism.

This Code should be read in conjunction with other important UEM documents (UEM Constitution, CoC against Sexual Harassment; CoC for Transparency and against corruption; Gender Policy; MT Statement Equal before God).

**Decided by the UEM General Assembly,
September 2022**