

The diverse faces of sexual harassment and abuse

- Sexual harassment is violating human rights (cf. the Declaration »Violence against Women« by the 60th Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, 2004). Sexual harassment is internationally defined as any form of sexual advance that is uninvited, unwanted and unwelcome. These advances come in the forms of obscene gestures, inappropriate closeness and touching, suggestive looks and pressure for dates or activities with sexual overtones. Sexual harassment also includes sexual remarks and physical contact that degrades a person. The aggressor for those actions can be male or female.
- Sexual harassment takes place in all sectors of society and is significant for a lack of respect for persons so that they are treated as objects.
- In the daily life of gatherings, guesthouses, families, places of worship and religious communities and institutions, sexual harassment occurs. In most of the cases the victims of sexual harassment are women.



United Evangelical Mission
Communion of churches
in three Continents



Deutsches
Zentralinstitut
für soziale
Fragen/DZI
DZI Spenden-Siegel:
Geprüft + Empfohlen

United Evangelical Mission
Communion of Churches in three Continents
Rudolfstrasse 137
42285 Wuppertal
Germany
Fon +49 (0) 202 / 890 04-0
Fax +49 (0) 202 / 890 04-79
info@vemission.org
www.vemission.org

Closing remark

This document is intended to sensitise all UEM members concerning the problem of sexual harassment and to encourage them to deal with it. Therefore it will be distributed in the churches and in different languages (English, French, German, Bahasa Indonesia, Kiswahili). It was written by the Gender Commission and decided by the UEM General Assembly on Borkum/Germany in 2008.

Imprint

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»Sexual harassment is violating Human Rights«

A Code of Conduct for the UEM

The Bible affirms that women and men of all cultures, nations and religions are created equally in the image of God. Each human being has received his or her dignity as a gift of God. This is the basis for mutual respect in the relationship between men and women.

HOTLINE:

Preamble

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This is one of the basic theological convictions shared by the 35 members in Africa, Asia and Germany constituting the United Evangelical Mission.



How to avoid sexual harassment:

- Behave respectfully towards the other gender and do not misuse private, professional or any other relationships.
- Be aware of the special responsibility that any person in authority has.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences and practices.
- Do not cross boundaries set by others. If someone says »No«, respect it.
- Refuse any inappropriate gesture or contact. Show that such behaviour is not welcome.
- Draw public attention if harassment occurs in public places.
- Share your concern with someone you trust.
- Don't accuse falsely people for sexual harassment for your own advantage.
- On the front of this leaflet you can find a local hotline number, which you should use in any case of sexual harassment.
- Use immediately the hotline number in the front of this leaflet if somebody has accused you of harassing behaviour without reason.



What action should be taken?

- The appointment of two responsible individuals (one man and one woman) to act as a »disciplinary board« should be considered in the beginning of all meetings, conferences and workshops.
- When complaints are made they must be carefully and properly investigated. This has to be carried out initially by the disciplinary board in private with the offender and the offended party.
- Concerning the victim arrangements should be made to receive counselling and pastoral care.
- In any form of sexual harassment the victim should be supported to undertake legal action.
- The offender should be removed from the meeting and not be put or remain in positions where he or she has the opportunity to repeat such offences.
- The offender should also have the possibility to receive a counselling and pastoral care.