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KERIC EQUALITY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

KERIC believes that human rights are universal and that every individual is equally entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Inequality and discrimination have a huge impact on the lives of people, and they undermine human rights.

POLICY AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure our commitment to equality and diversity is being promoted both within the organisation and in all external interactions and the overall elimination of overall discrimination. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, local partners, partner organizations or any other person representing KERIC.

KERIC VALUES

KERIC is a non-profit non-governmental organization whose mission is to connect our region Kysuce with the world via various non-formal activities. We believe that it is our duty as an educational organization working with children and young people to proudly promote and encourage our values such as respect, humanity, integrity or compassion. Each value matters and taken they inform how we will deliver our mission. We try to mirror our values in all the work we do. We believe in a diverse workplace not because the law requires it but because we are all equal as human beings.

Our values definitions:

Respect: KERIC believes that respect is one of the key values that is necessary not only in our workplace but in every aspect of our lives. It is necessary to make our clients, staff, volunteers, partners and any other people we are in contact with feel safe and appreciated.

Integrity: KERIC understands integrity as our duty to be honest and consistent with all the work we do. We are accountable for every aspect of our activities and committed to stay faithful to our moral principles.

Humanity: KERIC is committed to protect and promote human rights as stated by United Nations and EU. We believe we are all entitled to same rights just by being humans, regardless the sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, beliefs, language, sexual orientation etc. We all deserve the same understanding, compassion and respect.

Commitment: KERIC's mission is to continue in a sustainable work with high quality results, to stay motivated and follow our goals. Remain improving our activities and delivering results that benefits our community, clients, staff, volunteers, local partners and partner organizations.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

KERIC follows the EU Equality Act 2010 and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Act and rights prohibit direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation in employment on different grounds. The definition of discrimination focuses on whether a person has been treated less favourably in the workplace than another person in a similar situation on any of the grounds.

The grounds are:

- Racial and ethnic origin
- Religion and belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

These five areas of discrimination, together with gender discrimination, are included in the Amsterdam Treaty of the European Union as areas where the EU can act to prevent discrimination.

Of course, discrimination can occur for other reasons, e.g. because a person is married or not, or because of their income level or because of where they live. Discrimination can also happen because of a mix of different reasons, e.g. because of someone's age and their sex (e.g. an older woman might be particularly vulnerable to unfair treatment in the jobs market).

The laws to protect people against discrimination because of their racial and ethnic origin (e.g. because they are black or Roma) cover not only employment but other areas of daily life where unfair treatment can occur, e.g. in schools, housing, health care or access to good and services, e.g. unfair treatment in shops, restaurants, hotels etc.

All countries in the EU are obliged to take these equality rules on board. Countries joining the EU also must comply with these rules.

EU equal treatment legislation sets out minimum levels of protection that apply to everyone living and working in the European Union.

The Act and Rights covers employees in both the public and private sectors The Act outlaw's discrimination on any of the discriminatory grounds in all areas relevant to employment as follows:

- Discrimination by employers: regarding access to employment, conditions of employment, training and promotion.

- Discrimination in collective agreements: regarding access to and conditions of employment and equal pay for like work.
- Discriminatory advertising: which indicates an intention to discriminate or advertising that might reasonably be understood as indicating an intention to discriminate.
- Discrimination by employment agencies: against any person seeking employment or other services of the agency.
- Discrimination in vocational training: discrimination in the provision of vocational training.
- Discrimination by certain bodies: Discrimination by trade unions, professional and trade associations as regards membership and other benefits.

LEGISLATION IN SLOVAKIA

Anti-discriminatory law

The Anti-Discrimination Act [1], as amended in 2004, established a general framework for the application of the principle of equal treatment and legal remedies in case of breach of this principle. It defined basic concepts such as the principle of equal treatment consisting in the prohibition of discrimination for whatever reason, discrimination (direct, indirect), harassment, instruction and incitement to discriminate, unjustified sanction, appointed persons who are obliged to observe the principle of equal treatment the obligation to comply with this principle and, in these areas, he set out the reasons why the principle of equal treatment must be respected. It also lays down exceptions to the principle of equal treatment and details of the possibility of bringing an action before a court in the event of non-compliance.

The principle of equal treatment has been enshrined in the areas of social security, health care, provision of goods, services and education, and in the field of employment and similar legal relations. In the areas of social security, health care, provision of goods, services and education, the principle of equal treatment was guaranteed to persons irrespective of their gender, racial origin, national or ethnic origin. In the field of employment and similar legal relationships, discrimination was prohibited on grounds of sex, religion or belief, racial origin, national or ethnic origin, disability, age or sexual orientation.

KEY ANTI- DISCRIMINATION PRINCIPLES IN KERIC

- Human rights are universal, and every individual is entitled to dignity and respect. In dealing with employees, volunteers, partners and others everyone should be recognised as equal and be allowed to utilise their own skills and abilities.
- KERIC's policy is to ensure that no one who engages with KERIC receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion, or is disadvantaged in any way.

- The organisation is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all aspects of activities.
- KERICs policy is to be fully committed to the safeguarding and protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. In this regard, KERIC seeks to ensure the protection of every person with whom we come into contact, either directly or indirectly through our work as a non-profit organisation.

EQUALITY IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

As the work of KERIC is spread across many countries all around the world that have different laws, religions, customs and social contexts, there can be challenges in establishing an effective Equality policy. In this regard the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and EU Equality act provide the fundamental direction to the work in partnership with KERIC.

KERIC promises to work with our international partner organisations and our volunteers to create the most suitable placement for each participant.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In this policy KERIC commits to:

- To comply with all legal obligations and with the grounds set out by the EU Equality Act, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the anti-discriminatory law in Slovakia, in all work in Slovakia.
- Identify, reduce and eliminate, where possible, any barriers to participation; promoting inclusivity in all our activities.
- Disseminate this policy to all staff, volunteers and partner organisations.
- Make this policy document available on the KERIC website.
- Where there is a concern that discrimination has occurred, KERIC promises to address the situation in an appropriate manner.
- No one will be victimized for making a complaint of discrimination.
- To take all reasonable steps to place volunteers in appropriate placements which match their individual needs and skills.
- To address all reasonable requests and needs to allow individuals with specific needs to participate in their desired KERIC activity or project.
- Any personal information given to KERIC will be kept in a safe manner with access restricted and only shared on a need-to-know basis, for more information read our Data Protection and Children and vulnerable adults protection Policies.
- KERIC will ensure that all international partner organisations are aware of the Equality policy and or developed their own compatible with ours or follow our policy.

- All KERIC staff, volunteers, partners must be made aware of this Equality policy and agree to be bound by the contents of this policy.
- KERIC will not cooperate with organisations or individual that displays a pattern of discriminatory behaviour.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

When talking new employee recruitment:

Prior to engaging in the recruitment process, the skills, experience and qualifications necessary for the successful candidate will be identified. A summary of the role and responsibilities will be stated in the advertisement, and applicants will be invited to contact KERIC a full description. Applications will be screened against these requirements.

Interviews will be conducted in a fair manner ensuring that questions are designed to seek information relevant to performance in the position. The role and responsibilities as well as values and goals of the organization will be further clarified during the interview. Other selection methods will be employed where appropriate, for example reference checking.

A candidate for employment who has a disability will be provided reasonable accommodation to facilitate their ability to compete for a post, and to fulfil a post where she/he is the most suitable candidate for the role. Reasonable accommodation will only be provided where it does not present a disproportionate burden on the Organisation.

Successful candidates will receive a full job description which will be included in their Contract of Employment and/or their Volunteer Agreement in addition relevant policies, including but not limited to, the Equality, Health and Safety, Security and Child Safeguarding.

Records related to unsuccessful candidates may be retained for up to 24 months following appointment of the successful candidate.

When talking new volunteer recruitment:

KERIC always inform public about new volunteering opportunities online including Facebook, KERIC webpage and Solidarity Corps platform. We invite all the interested candidates for informative meeting in KERIC, where we share details about all the projects available. If person is not available to come for different reasons, we are able to invite them for other, more suitable time, skype or phone.

After the first informative meeting interested candidates must sent us a cover letter and CV. If necessary, we will send this information to our project organization with agreement of the candidate. We believe in equity and for that reason we tried to priorities candidates with fewer opportunities first. If the candidate, KERIC and hosting organization are in favour we invite the candidate for predeparture training. During this period the candidate has the chance to contact the hosting organization and find out more as well as KERIC and hosting organization have the right to skype interview the candidate.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

KERIC believes in equality of opportunity in relation to training and to providing development opportunities for employees and volunteers in line with job requirements. Employees, volunteers and their skills and motivation are an important asset to KERIC. Continual Employees and volunteers training, and development is an integral part of the ongoing Organisational development and mission.

Training may be provided in several ways, varying from formal classroom style lectures to on the job training provided by a colleague or trainer from partner organization. In all cases, training is a valuable method of ensuring that employees and volunteers are familiar with their role and capable of fulfilling that role to the requirements of the organisation. Most of the training and development takes place informally on the job.

Where possible, reasonable accommodation will be provided to facilitate an employee or volunteer with a disability to participate fully in training. Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by employees and volunteers during their working hours, there is an expectation that employees and volunteers will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work. Reasonable notice of such a requirement will be provided.

Training and development will be provided to maintain and extend the skills of employees and volunteers. Training and development will be provided in line with the KERIC goals and projects. KERIC recognises that by investing in the training and development of its employees and volunteers, it is investing in the future of the organisation by maintaining the highest standards of work provided by employees and volunteers. KERIC believes all its employees and volunteers have the capacity to develop but acknowledges that they will do this in different ways and require varying support. Ensuring that employees and volunteers have access to effective training, in line with the resources available to the organisation, is a key goal.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Organization to identify any mandatory training and development, and to ensure it is carried out. If there is any training that the employees and volunteers would like to attend to improve their work, it is a responsibility of the head of organization to try to provide the opportunity.

KERIC provides training opportunities to all our paid staff as well as volunteers to meet their training needs. Our objective is to balance the individual's aspirations and needs with the Organisation's requirements and priorities. Training comes in many ways. It may be done in KERIC, externally, or jointly with other organisations. This may take place within our normal working hours but may also be outside our normal working hours and at a location away from your normal place of work.

Training and development will include sharing knowledge across the partners and community where possible and appropriate. This will be done via work shadowing and team meetings/conferences, workshops, debates etc.

KERIC will review the effectiveness of its training and development policy and procedures on an annual basis, and ensure it is in line with KERIC objectives.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Hours of work and Pay & Benefits are set out in each individual Employee and Volunteers terms and conditions of employment.

Normal office hours are 8:30 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday with a one-hour break for lunch.

Where required, person will be required to keep timesheets.

Due to the nature of various roles, from time to time, employees and volunteers may be required to work in the evenings and at weekends. This will vary depending on the role and may be more applicable to some roles than others.

REDUNDANCY

If KERIC will be in position of potentially having to let one or more members of staff go due to financial cutbacks or restructuring, the head of organization will firstly investigate all the alternatives to redundancy and consultation may take place in accordance with legal requirements. Any decisions in this regard will be made by the agreement of the heads of organization.

Redundancies will only be made in line with the policies of KERIC.

Notice periods will be adhered to in accordance with legislative specifications based on years of service. Employees are entitled to statutory redundancy pay and reasonable time off work to look for alternative employment. Employees do not qualify for redundancy if they are ending work under a fixed term contract and have thus waived redundancy rights.

WORKING IN A TEAM AND ITS MANAGING

Employees and volunteers perform best if they are motivated and enthusiastic, feel valued, know what they are supposed to be doing, and get appreciated for doing it well. Good procedures for supervision and support are vital tools in achieving this. All individual members of staff and volunteers have a responsibility to work well as a team in order to achieve the goals of KERIC.

Supervision

The heads of organization are responsible for carrying out managing supervision. The purposes of this are to:

- Monitor, evaluate and approve performance
- Clarify priorities
- Share information about work
- Discuss how the employees and volunteers feel about the work
- Recognise and deal with existing and potential problems
- Provide a framework for discussing and agreeing change.
- develop motivating working environment

KERIC is organizing regular Monday meetings, where all the employees and volunteers share the work they have done, plan new activities and express their feelings and opinions about ongoing projects and cooperation. If not feeling comfortable sharing the thoughts on public every volunteer and staff has an opportunity to talk to the heads of organization privately during their personal office hours or schedule personal meeting.

Cooperation and team work amongst employees, volunteers and other partners is encouraged and expected. A professional attitude in which the job comes first, and feelings come second is expected; professional courtesy must reign. Appropriate consultation, communication and

decision-making processes are in place in order to foster this team spirit.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that KERIC operates a fair disciplinary process which has regard to the rights of all employees and volunteers. The policy is to be applied in order to assist and encourage employees and volunteers to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct, attendance and performance where shortcomings are identified. The policy and procedure aim, where appropriate, to be corrective rather than punitive.

PROCEDURE

The primary objective of this procedure is to ensure that employees and volunteers are made aware of any shortcomings in their performance/conduct/attendance and provided with an opportunity to resolve this situation. To this end, issues will generally be addressed through the informal procedure whereby the head of organization will raise the issue with the employee or volunteer and agree a corrective action plan in order to resolve the situation without recourse to the formal procedure. However, where this fails to resolve a situation, or the informal process is deemed inappropriate in the given circumstances, then the formal process may be initiated.

During the formal stages of the procedure, employees and volunteers have the right to be accompanied by a representative at a meeting. The role of this representative is to provide support, to ensure that the procedures followed are fair, and, if appropriate, to help the employee or volunteer present their case. However, it should be noted that the contractual relationship exists between the employee, volunteer and the Employer. Therefore, questioning will be directed to the employee or volunteer, and where possible the employee or volunteer must speak on their own behalf. The stage at which any employee or volunteer enters the disciplinary procedure depends upon the severity of the issue being dealt with.

At all formal stages of the procedure the employee or volunteer is entitled to be made aware of the case against him/her, and to be provided with any evidence to be used against him/her. The Employee or volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond to any allegations and evidence, and head of organization will give due consideration to all responses received. Representation is permitted at all formal stages of the procedure. The employee or volunteer is also permitted to appeal the findings of any formal disciplinary investigation or any sanction imposed under the procedure.

MISCONDUCT

The following behaviours may be misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being initiated under the disciplinary procedure. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exclusive. All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Minor breach of a workplace policy or procedure;
- Poor timekeeping;
- Abuse of sick leave policy;
- A refusal to carry out a reasonable request;
- Minor breaches of health and safety regulations;
- Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation, or any act of discrimination;
- Bringing the Organisation into disrepute;
- Misuse of Organisation property.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

The following behaviours may be gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal, depending on the circumstances of the case. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exclusive. All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Serious harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or other act of discrimination;
- Serious abuse of sick leave;
- Theft or other criminal or fraudulent behaviour and activities;
- Serious breaches of health and safety rules or endangerment of another person in the workplace;
- Serious breaches of confidentiality;
- Being under the influence of an intoxicant at work or in the course of employment;
- Violent or threatening behaviour;
- Serious failure to adhere to an agreed workplace procedure or other agreed terms of employment
- Incident or incidents that are in violation of our Child Safe Guarding and Vulnerable Adult policy

INFORMAL PROCEDURE

In general, where there is an allegation of poor performance, attendance or conduct, the head of organization will address the issue informally with the employee or volunteer. This may be done by way of an informal meeting, or call. The objective of the informal discussion is to correct the issue of concern in an honest and constructive manner.

The informal discussion will:

- focus on helping the employee or volunteer to understand how their performance/conduct/attendance has fallen short of the acceptable level; and suggest possible solutions and timeframes for improvement.

After the discussion, brief notes will be taken and held by the head of the organization who led the informal discussion. If employee, volunteer achieves and sustains the necessary level of improvement, no further action will be taken. If the necessary improvements have not been made within the agreed timeframe the formal disciplinary procedure will commence.

FORMAL PROCEDURE

In all cases where an employee's, volunteer's standards of performance, attendance and/or conduct fall below those expected by the organisation, the formal disciplinary procedure may be initiated. In all cases in which the Formal Procedure is initiated, a hearing will be held with the employee, volunteer to put the allegation to him/her, and to hear his/her responses to the issue. It may be necessary to formally investigate the facts surrounding a case and this may occur prior to the hearing, but in most cases a hearing will suffice to ensure that the employee, volunteer is given a fair opportunity to respond. Where there is a dispute of the facts of a case, and an investigation is necessary, the investigation procedure will be explained to the employee, volunteer by the head of organization.

DISMISSAL

There are two ways in which dismissal may occur. Generally, the employee, volunteer will have been

notified of concerns and have been provided with an opportunity to improve through one or more stages of the disciplinary procedure. (informal talk, formal procedures- hearing etc.)

The other form of dismissal is a summary dismissal, which normally results from an act of gross misconduct. An act of misconduct will be considered as gross misconduct where the act is so serious that the organisation cannot reasonably be expected to retain the employee, volunteer in employment. Summary dismissal is dismissal without notice.

Decisions to dismiss in such circumstances may only be taken by both heads of the organization (Miriam Petříková and Ivana Hrušková). The decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee or volunteer.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy was created in November 2019 and reviewed in August 2021

This policy will be reviewed annually

In the event of new legislation passed into law while the current policy is active, the new legislative requirements will be added to and any conflicting procedures stated in this policy, will be deleted and the policy amended accordingly.

Next review date: August 2022