



Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy statement

Windle Trust International (WTI) is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the workplace, eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination, and encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture throughout the organisation.

We recognise that the differences between people, whether actual or perceived, can be defining characteristics that play a significant role in determining an individual's access to opportunities and resources and their capacities, needs and vulnerability.

In the different countries that we work legal frameworks and cultural norms may differ as may the way inequality, exclusion and discrimination are understood and manifested. In this context, as an international organisation, WTI is committed to addressing inequality, promoting fairness and challenging unlawful or unfair discrimination through its policies and practice in the workplace.

Purpose

This policy reinforces WTI's commitment to equality and fairness and not providing less favourable facilities or treatment in the workplace on the grounds of age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender), gender reassignment and sexual orientation¹.

It aims to ensure those working for us are aware of issues around inequality and discrimination (whether direct, indirect, by association or through victimisation) and their obligation to comply with the policy in order to promote best practice in the workplace and maintain high standards of conduct and programme delivery.

Governance

WTI is committed to developing good practices that promote diversity on the Board of Trustees and support equitable treatment of its members, staff and the communities served through its programmes. WTI is committed to:

- An approach to diversity that supports and enhances the Board's good governance, leadership, accountability, effectiveness, decision making and the strategic purpose of WTI.

This includes regular review of the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity of background of its members to identify imbalances and gaps and inform trustee recruitment and training. Consideration will be given to how and where vacancies are publicised and the selection process in order to attract a diverse pool of candidates, as well as issues such as terms of service and rotation.

- Encouraging inclusive and accessible participation, including when, where and how meetings are held and chaired to ensure they are accessible and create an environment where open and constructive debate is encouraged.

¹ Under the UK Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of these protected characteristics

Employment

WTI is committed to:

- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful or unfair discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This includes encouraging staff to develop their full potential, so their talents and skills can be fully utilised for the benefit of the organisation and those that its programmes serve. This is underpinned by our values and supported by our code of conduct.

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace and minimize the risk of discrimination in the organisation through our policies, practice and training of staff.

This includes when selecting candidates for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities, terms and conditions of employment including pay and benefits, dealing with grievance and disciplinary issues and redundancy and termination of employment.

- Make decisions concerning job candidates and employees on the basis of merit, including qualifications and aptitude, performance, skills and ability to undertake the role.

In keeping with this policy, close members of the same family will not normally be employed within the organisation. For the sake of accountability and transparency, employees will neither initiate nor participate, directly or indirectly, in employment actions involving their kin. Under no circumstances shall close family kin be employed in any position of authority over the other.

- Encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination in the workplace to raise their concerns so we can learn from this and take appropriate corrective measures.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful or unfair discrimination by fellow employees, programme stakeholders, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Where appropriate, this will be dealt with through WTI's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal.

- Review employment practices and procedures regularly and when necessary to ensure fairness, and also keep updated in light of changes in the law.
- Seek to develop appropriate mechanisms to assess and monitor how the organisation is meeting the aims and commitments this policy and it is working in practice.

Disability

WTI does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of disability with regard to any position for which the employee or applicant is qualified. WTI will make reasonable adjustments to working conditions, hours and equipment in order to accommodate the needs of disabled employees within the constraints of its resources and the working environment.

Equality, gender and diversity in our programmes

WTI has a specific strategic focus on promoting access to and improving the quality of education for communities affected by conflict, displacement, neglect or discrimination. WTI is dedicated to increasing access for these communities and groups and reducing inequalities in access to high quality education, particularly for women and girls.

Different forms of gender-based discrimination, socio-cultural or economic exclusion have resulted in women and girls often facing the most significant barriers in terms of access to education. Promoting access to education for girls is therefore a distinct priority for our work.

In line with our strategic plan, to address inequalities, WTI's programmes may target individuals marginalized or underrepresented in terms of their access to education due to factors such as gender, refugee or internally displaced status, and origin and residence in a particular geographical area or community. WTI aims to ensure that our programmes and scholarships are open to a diverse range of applicants without discrimination within the parameters of our strategic priorities. Particular care will be taken during any selection process to include a wide range of applicants, subject to the constraints of criteria required by funding partners and the universities and educational institutions we work with.

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