



Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Purpose

Gillett, Preston and Associates Inc. affirms commitment to uphold and lead by example in its operations and education related activities for quality education in Vanuatu where human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, youth inclusion, minority groups inclusion and child protection are integrated in Vanuatu education policy, planning, facilities, curriculum and learning opportunities.

Scope

As an organisation that values quality education for all Ni-Vanuatu, Human Rights, Gender Equality, Inclusion and Child Protection are fundamental to GPA objectives and activities, that is, for Vanuatu to achieve an education environment that provides equal opportunity for all.

This policy applies to all personnel and stakeholders working with or representing GPA in their activities.

Policy Statement

Gillett, Preston and Associates Inc. recognises the importance and benefits gained from maintaining and promoting an environment of diversity, inclusion and equal employment opportunity. That is, supporting and actively providing equal opportunity to all.

GPA applies measures within operations and project activities to support:

- Human Rights
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Gender Equality
- Disability Inclusion
- Youth Inclusion
- Minority Groups Inclusion

The organisation supports and applies measures within business operations and project planning and delivery to support diversity, inclusion and equal employment opportunity, this includes:

- Merit based recruitment processes.
- Actively developing a diverse workforce.
- Awareness training.
- Considering diversity needs and opportunities in project planning and delivery.
- Assessing facilities, and adjusting where practicable to do so, to improve functionality and accessibility.
- Maintaining a code of conduct that addresses obligations of workers to treat all persons equally.
- Maintaining robust reporting and investigation processes focused on continual improvement.

Everyone is entitled to the same rights and freedoms, regardless of their disability status. This is a fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),

which Vanuatu ratified in 2008. However, persons with disabilities often lack equitable access to the same opportunities enjoyed by their peers without disabilities.

It is a GPA goal to actively participate in developing an environment where all have equal right, opportunity, and access to receive a safe, accessible and fulfilling education free from marginalisation and discrimination based on age, gender, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, social status, wealth, physical or intellectual limitations or impairments, location or other minority vulnerabilities.

Equal Employment Opportunity

To determine the best applicant for a position, appropriate selection procedures are in place that will ensure the recruitment, selection processes and decisions are transparent, impartial and fair, that recruitment and selection processes encourage and identify the most suitable persons without prejudice based on gender, race, marital status, religion, disability or any other non-merit related characteristic. In particular, the recruitment process ensures that:

- All potential applicants have reasonable access and opportunity to apply for vacancies.
- Existing employees or contractors wishing to apply are provided equal opportunity to do so.
- Applicants are given the same information about the selection process.
- All applicants receive and are assessed against the same selection criteria.
- Selection Committee make sound and unbiased selection decisions using information gathering methods appropriate to the nature of the job being filled.
- The selection process is free from external or personally motivated interference.

GPA selects all personnel based on merit, this is done by determining and assessing their:

- Skill and ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the job.
- Standard and efficiency of work performance.
- Formal qualifications and training.
- Relevant and recent industry experience.
- Personal qualities including conduct.
- Moral credibility in relation to the role, for no criminal record relevant to the area of work.
- Selection criteria may also address critical physical requirements for the role, that is, requirements that cannot be addressed with 'reasonable accommodation' by GPA.

Responsibilities

GPA:

- Ensures this policy and its associated procedures align with legislation, government policies and the corporate goals and values of GPA.
- Ensures this policy and its associated procedures are implemented, monitored and reporting is provided on the policy commitments.
- Ensures this policy and its associated procedures are reviewed regularly to make sure they continue to be relevant and are achieving what they are intended to achieve.

Definitions

Human Rights

The Vanuatu National Gender Equality Policy states Human Rights are a set of entitlements that belong to a person by virtue of being born and are independent of their sex, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, where they live, or any other status.

The fundamental rights and freedoms of human beings are enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and associated protocols, and in the National Constitution of Vanuatu.

“to respect the rights and freedoms of others and to cooperate fully with others in the interests of interdependence and solidarity”. Vanuatu Constitution (2-II-7) Fundamental Duties

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups...” Article 26 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations)

Inclusive

Inclusive means the organisation’s services are open to everyone, without discrimination or barriers, not limited to certain people.

Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equality means that women and men of all ages, in all their diversity, have equal rights in all areas of life, the right to:

- be safe.
- be respected.
- earn incomes.
- express their views and be heard.
- express their gender identity.
- choose how many children they have.
- choose their partner.
- have safe and accessible services and infrastructure for women and men differently abled.

- participate in decision-making and occupy leadership positions.
- decide for themselves the future they want.

Vanuatu Kastom plays an important part of cultural and kinship systems in Vanuatu. Whilst customary beliefs, values and practices vary between islands, they are widely observed and co-exist with people's strong faith in Christianity. Contemporary Vanuatu society is largely patriarchal. Whilst kastom bestowed authority to men with chiefly titles, decisions were shared and agreed to by both spouses within the extended family unit. The role played by women in household decision-making no longer exist or constitute modern notions of kastom. The dynamic interaction between kastom, religion, and globalisation contributes to the complexity and sensitivity of gender issues.

Disability Inclusion

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Disability may be experienced by people of any age – children, young and older people.

Youth Inclusion

Vanuatu's youth, defined as the ages of 12-30 make up over 60% of Vanuatu's population. To include, engage and collaborate with marginalized youth, youth at risk, young people with disabilities, and young people with diverse gender orientations and sexual identity. Recognition of youth agency through their talents, skills and capabilities is supportive of an asset-based approach to youth empowerment, and towards the ability to change their own lives.

Minority Groups Inclusion

A right to realise their potential, and to have the same educational opportunities in a secure and equitable environment. This includes all minorities such as non Christian religion and all from the LGBTQI community.

The Vanuatu Constitution identifies freedom of religion, and also states that the state is founded on a commitment to traditional Melanesian values, faith in God and Christian principles.

Approximately 83% of Vanuatu's population is Christian, the other minority religions, being made up of Animism (7%), Buddhism (4%), Baha'I (3%), and Other (3%). The dominance of Christianity in Vanuatu places all other people of different religions as minority.

Sexuality and gender identity is a positive, core part, of being human and experiencing wellbeing and fulfilment. And yet, when diversity of sexuality and gender identity is rendered invisible, or becomes the basis of discrimination, the rights to decisions over bodies, sexualities, identities and intimate consensual relations of one's own choosing are violated. Further, poverty and gender inequalities can be compounded, and development interventions can be inappropriate or fail to reach LGBTQI people altogether, resulting in multiple marginalisation of LGBTQI individuals.

References

NZ Aid Programme Health and Safety Information for Partners and Contractors
MFAT Health and Safety Acknowledgement Form

MFAT Technical Advisor Code of Conduct
MFAT Gender-Analysis-Guideline
MFAT Human Rights Analysis Guideline
MFAT Knowledge Note: Sustainable Economic Development and Gender Equality
Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu (2-II-7) Fundamental duties
Vanuatu Health and Safety at Work Act – Consolidated 2006
Vanuatu Disaster Risk Management Act 2019
Vanuatu Employment Act - Consolidated 2019
Vanuatu Workmen’s Compensation Act 2004 and subsequent amendments
Vanuatu National Youth Authority Act 2018
Vanuatu National Child Protection Policy 2016-2026
Vanuatu National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025
Vanuatu National Gender Equality Policy 2020-2030
Vanuatu National Youth Policy 2019-2024
Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030
Vanuatu National Human Resources Development Plan 2020-2025
Vanuatu National Sustainability Plan and M&E Framework 2016-2030
Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights 2018-2030
UNICEF Child Rights Guidance Note
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations) Article 26

Procedures

Procedure 40 Recruitment
Procedure 41 Induction
Procedure 42 Training and Professional Development
Procedure 43 Code of Conduct and Ethics
Procedure 44 Handling Complaints

Communication

GPA ensures communication of this policy statement to employees, members, partners, contractors and visitors through digital communication, induction processes and training activities.

Version Control

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