

## Introduction

At the Academy of Mission we want to form a Christian community in solidarity.<sup>1</sup> We come from different cultural, denominational, ethnic, and national backgrounds. We have different opinions and value-systems. We come together as human beings of different genders and sexual orientations but we all belong to the one body of Christ.

Academy of Mission, as an ecumenical environment, welcomes and encourages the full and equal participation of all. It also strives to bring together a community based on the values of solidarity and mutual concern that challenges all forms of violence and harassment. As members of this community, we are committed to raising awareness about sexual harassment to prevent it from occurring and to provide a safe space, free from intimidation for all (residents, staffs, guests, and visitors).

Our cultural diversities add to the strength of our community and are something to be cherished and celebrated. As we encounter our differences, we should be careful not to assume that our way of being and behaving is comfortable for everyone else. Sometimes our differences of age, gender, culture, spirituality, religion, ability, language, ethnicity, caste, race and color, and class make it a challenge to understand and communicate effectively with one another. What may be considered “normal friendliness and sociability” to one person can be misinterpreted in a culturally mixed group and even between individuals of the same culture or background. Finding appropriate expressions of friendship and sense of belongingness in a positive, non-threatening way is a challenge faced by every ecumenical community.

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<sup>1</sup> We follow in this introduction the code of conduct of WCC cf.

[www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2006-porto-alegre/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/a-pastoral-and-educational-response-to-sexual-harassment](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2006-porto-alegre/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/a-pastoral-and-educational-response-to-sexual-harassment).

It is a global reality that the human family is broken. Such form of brokenness is violence against the human person. This violence expresses itself in ways such as sexual abuse, child abuse and sexual harassment, and is directed predominantly towards women. The whole Christian community works towards healing and restoration but it also needs to acknowledge that it contributes to this brokenness. Therefore, we commit ourselves to continue to work for the healing and restoration of the human family.

**Basic ethical commitments and standards of the Academy of Mission include:**

- Respect for the dignity and integrity of all human beings
- Fair and just treatment of all regardless of age, gender, culture, spirituality, religion, ability, language, ethnicity, caste, race and color, and class – without discrimination, exploitation or harassment.

**Definition of sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as any form of sexual advance that is uninvited, unwanted and unwelcome. Sexual harassment may involve a wide range of behaviour, from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to offensive and unwelcome hugs, squeezes, pinches, kisses, overt demands and physical abuse or assault. Unwelcome acts will be considered as violations of an acceptable code of conduct especially when the accuser has in some way made her/his feelings of what is “unwelcome” known in advance. Academy of Mission acknowledges that even within its gatherings, our families and churches, sexual harassment does occur. Harassment is never the fault of the person being harassed. By its nature, harassment is unwanted attention or behaviour. It is not consensual.

### **Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to one or more of the following:**

- ◆ Overt or covert sexual advances or contact.
- ◆ Mental abuse (which may include obscene jokes, innuendos, unacceptable visual contact, seduction).
- ◆ Physical abuse or assault (which may include fondling, unwelcome hugs and kisses, and genital contact).
- ◆ Any intentional touching or fondling (either directly or through the clothing) of such areas of the body that are sensitive and personal.

### **What are some of the things you can do if you are being sexually harassed?**

- ◆ Refuse any inappropriate gesture or contact.
- ◆ Make it clear to the perpetrator by words or gestures that such behaviour is unwelcome.
- ◆ Draw public attention when or if harassment persists in public places.
- ◆ Share your concern with someone you trust.

Trust your intuition and feelings if someone's behaviour makes you feel uncomfortable. People who experience harassment sometimes try to rationalize or deny what is really going on.

### **Support Team and Its Composition**

If you are sexually harassed or falsely accused, make a report either to your tutor at Academy of Mission or to a member of the Support Team of Academy of Mission (consisting of one of the Head of Studies, one staff, one student). You can also contact both or the whole team. It depends on the situation and is your decision if you want counselling or prepare the next steps. But if there is the need to confront the accused person, the Support Team has to meet and decide on the

next steps. Later it might be necessary to inform the board and ask them for a decision on possible sanctions.

### **Procedures to be followed for Formal Complaints at the Academy of Mission**

In case the complaint or accusation of sexual harassment is brought to the attention of the Support Team all cases will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The complaint or the case may be verbal or written.

- ◆ The Support Team will meet privately and conduct /investigation with the complainant who may choose a friend to accompany oneself and to provide moral support.
- ◆ The Support Team will schedule and conduct private meetings with the accused with the purpose of investigation.
- ◆ The accused shall be informed of the charge and advised that one may also choose an appropriate friend to accompany oneself and to provide moral support.
- ◆ After initial interviews, the Support Team will determine whether or not to proceed with the investigation and follow up with appropriate action.

### **Actions to be considered by the Support Team**

Issues to be considered by the Support Team in making recommendations may include the intent of the accused, awareness of the appropriateness of the behaviour in question, awareness of why the behaviour is or is not appropriate, and willingness to take responsibility for the behaviour and its consequences.

**The Support Team may recommend the following actions to be taken in relation to:**

#### **a) Care for the victim:**

1. The members of the Support Team shall respond with sensitivity and care to the victim.
2. Counselling and protection are offered to the victim.

## **b) The accused:**

1. **Education/awareness**: In cases where the situation is not necessarily sexual harassment but shows poor judgement. Clear guidance needs to be given and counselling may be recommended.
2. **Educative warning**: In cases where the situation is unquestionably inappropriate and unwise behaviour, but is not clearly sexual harassment. A clear warning states why the behaviour is inappropriate, and calls for an immediate cessation of the behaviour.
3. **Disciplinary measures**: In cases where the situation involves sexual harassment and has resulted in relatively serious consequences. The following actions will be taken as deemed appropriate:
  - ◆ Restrictions to be placed on the accused from having contact with the victim.
  - ◆ In consultation with the victim, recommendations may include that an apology from the accused appropriate to the situation be made to the victim.
  - ◆ The victim may also choose to take legal action beyond action by the Support Team and additionally Academy of Mission has to make a report to the police.
  - ◆ Possible sanctions:
    - termination of scholarship/ legal procedure

## **In Case of False Accusation**

1. **Education/awareness**: In cases where the situation is not necessarily sexual harassment but shows poor judgement. Clear guidance needs to be given to the accuser and counselling may be recommended.
2. **Educative warning**: A clear warning states why the behaviour is inappropriate, and calls for an immediate cessation of the behaviour.

3. **Disciplinary measures:** In cases where the situation does not involve sexual harassment and has resulted in relatively serious consequences for the accused, the following actions will be taken as deemed appropriate:
- ◆ In consultation with the alleged perpetrator, recommendations may include that an apology from the accuser appropriate to the situation be made.
  - ◆ The alleged perpetrator may also choose to take legal action beyond the Support Team.
  - ◆ Possible sanctions:
    - termination of scholarship/ legal procedure

This Code of Conduct was drawn up in cooperation with scholarship holders of the Academy of Mission. It should serve the good living together at the Academy of Mission, where everybody is important and plays a meaningful role in the community.

With my signature I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct and agree with its intention of a community of non-violence. I will work for a good living together.

## **Helpful contacts and numbers:**

The **Independent Contact Point** (UNA) is an offer for old and young people who have experienced border violations or sexualised violence in the North Church. The UNA is run by the non-denominational specialist counselling centre Wendepunkt e.V. It offers a trustworthy opportunity for discussion and counselling by qualified staff.

Church employees and leaders can also contact the UNA anonymously in case of uncertainties and questions on this topic.

Phone: 0800-022099 (free of charge and anonymous)  
Mondays 9-11 o'clock, Wednesdays 15-17 o'clock  
una@wendepunkt-ev.de  
www.wendepunkt-ev.de/UNA

## **Pastoral care by telephone**

For more than 50 years the TelefonSeelsorge has been available anonymously and free of charge around the clock at this number. People in crises will find here trained interlocutors who listen, accompany and advise.

In accordance with our mission statement, we open up an anonymous discussion room for all those seeking advice, regardless of faith or worldview.

**0800 / 111 0 111 (free of charge and anonymous)**