

## Ethical Guidelines of YMCA Finland

**YMCA is open and inclusive** of all people regardless of their ability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background. The Value Statement on Inclusion states: *"YMCA movement strives courageously against any discriminatory behavior and will always abide by the UN Human Rights Declaration"*. Since its founding in 1844, YMCA has brought social justice and peace to young people and their communities in 120 countries. The founding documents of the World Alliance of the YMCAs from 1855 have accepted diversity and inclusion around the globe as essential values to the global YMCA movement.

In addition to the inclusion statement and progressive human rights based approach, YMCA Finland follows the globally-agreed Governance Policy which promotes good governance and transparency among the movement, safeguarding policy called Working with Children and Young People Policy and Procedures, and policies preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and anti-corruption policies. The compliance with these policies is monitored and a complaints mechanism is in place.

YMCA's development cooperation practices follow the code of conduct that strengthens democratic structures and is in line with Finnish legislation, Finland's human rights policy, the Development Policy Program's human rights-based approach and concept of non-discrimination. These matters are described thoroughly in YMCA Finland's Handbook on Development Cooperation. YMCA Finland's own guidelines and principles are supplemented by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' ethical standards. YMCAs' compliance mechanisms are as follows:

*1. All those who are involved in development cooperation are guaranteed respect for their human dignity, human rights, culture, religion and ideology, and freedom from discrimination of any kind. Development cooperation supported by the Government must be free from all kinds of discrimination.*

→ **YMCA Movement strives courageously against any discriminatory behavior and will always abide by the UN Human Rights Declaration.** Diversity and inclusion are essential values to the YMCA movement where all people, regardless of their ability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background are all welcomed to join the YMCA. Consequently, these values are at the heart of the YMCA programming.

For outreach activities and selection of the right-holders in each intervention, the implementation team shall have the adequate skills and the previous experience on the inclusive selection process. In addition, the YMCA considers the accessibility of the right-holders to the provided services. To ensure the reach out of the most vulnerable, such as young women, refugees and people living with disabilities, links are created also with specialized local organizations to gain their inputs for inclusive implementation. Where capacity gaps arise, YMCA Finland will support the institutional learning processes in any means possible. See more information on human rights based approach, non-discrimination and other cross-cutting principles from the Handbook on Development Cooperation.

*2. Development cooperation focuses on people subject to discrimination in society and communities. It addresses the root causes of poverty, injustice and discrimination. It seeks to change prevailing discriminatory attitudes and structures.*

→ **YMCA recognizes that action to combat the poverty is an obligation under existing international human rights legislation.** The commitment to human rights based approach (HRBA) and Sustainable Development Goals accompanies the commitment to the Leave No One Behind -principle, highlighting the right of all, also the most vulnerable groups, to access the development. This is translated through

the program focus on most vulnerable groups in beneficiary selection as well as increasing awareness of issues related to inequalities. Through gender perspective and analysis, the interventions identify different factors affecting especially the participation of young women in activities. The interventions shall be planned together with the right-holders, for example through consultations and participatory methods in planning workshops. Accessibility and mobility factors shall be considered to allow and ensure the participation of women and people living with disabilities.

The interventions target also the duty-bearers of the local context to ensure the sustainability of the project but to also target them with advocacy and awareness-raising activities. Depending on the context, these duty-bearers can include local and governmental authorities, parliamentarians, other NGOs and international agencies, community and religious leaders. The close relationship with local actors will extend the interventions' impact, support the communications and outreach and ensure the sustainability. Interventions will also create opportunities for right-holders and duty-bearers to engage with each other. This will help addressing the underlying attitudes and structures.

*3. Provision of support must not be conditional upon the recipients' ideological or religious belief or political opinion or require conversion or prevent participation in development cooperation activities. Particular attention must be paid to this when working with minor children and youth. Funds granted for development cooperation must not be used to propagate an ideology, a religion or a political opinion.*

→ **YMCA is open and inclusive, provision of support is never conditional.** The Value Statement on Inclusion states: "YMCA strives against any discriminatory behavior and will always abide by the UN Human Rights Declaration". Statement has been approved by the YMCA World Council and it abides all National movements. Since its founding in 1844, YMCA has brought social justice and peace to young people and their communities, regardless of their ability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background.

Localized and contextual procedures are defined and applied in all the interventions to ensure equal access to all services provided by the YMCA Finland or its partners. The YMCA identity contains Christian values and history that manifest as love of neighbor, cherish and respect for human diversity. YMCAs do not propagate ideologies, religion or political opinions. YMCA partners commit themselves to the general and complementary conditions, including this ethical code of conduct, for the use of discretionary government transfers granted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

*4. Development cooperation promotes peaceful dialogue and fosters peace and partnerships in communities. It creates and employs approaches that enhance equal participation.*

→ **Since 1844, YMCA has brought social justice and peace to young people and their communities, regardless of their backgrounds.** Peace is one of the two key focus areas for YMCA Finland's development cooperation. YMCAs build peace through youth empowerment so that youth gain skills and capacity for peaceful and inclusive dialogue, to mitigate tensions in their own communities and to advocate for their rights. Strengthening the local civil societies is also one of the cross-cutting objectives in all YMCA work. This means strengthening the local civil society's capacity to improve the state of human rights in the country, but also to convey those skills to the right-holders and duty-bearers they work with. See YMCA Finland's Handbook on Development Cooperation for more information on thematic priorities, do no harm and conflict-sensitive approaches and civil society support.

*5. Good governance promotes sustainable development. Corruption and associated poor governance contribute to unequal access to development and weaken the realization of human rights. Anti-corruption work and tackling any suspicions head-on are conscious acts in an effort to improve the results and impacts of development cooperation.*

→ **YMCA Finland has zero tolerance for corruption.** YMCA Finland and its partners always sign an agreement prohibiting any misuse of funds and describing the measures for retrieval of funds in such cases. The global Governance Policy guides YMCA movement with good governance practices.

YMCA Finland investigates the capacity of development cooperation partners before starting any joint programs. This is done through a comprehensive partnership capacity assessment tool. Based on the provided information and ranking of answers the tool concludes a risk scoring and risk rating and provides recommendations for risk mitigation. Based on the assessment and risk analysis YMCA Finland decides how the financial administration is organized, including the recipient of funds. Most of the YMCA partners have professional financial departments that have their own financial management policies and adopt a corruption prevention and risk management systems.

Other measures between the partners include project management practices such as participatory project design, budgeting and detailed project plans, risk analysis, monitoring and reporting including financial administration, and evaluation practices. Moreover, within YMCA Finland, good governance is guided by the official rules of the organization, financial statute, financial audit, performance audit and code of conduct.

Besides its own assessments and analysis, YMCA Finland proactively collects and utilizes information from other national movements in the donor position, Area Alliances of YMCAs and the World YMCA. When possible, the resources are shared, and synergies sought in monitoring, information sharing and capacity building. The World YMCA and the Area Alliances monitor and actively address worrying developments through movement strengthening processes. The process is based on full transparency. If necessary, the Movement Strengthening Committee can assess the conditions for project cooperation or conduct a health check (internal audit) for the national movements. See YMCA Finland's Handbook on Development Cooperation for more information on capacity assessments, risk management, minimum standards and financial administration.

*6. Development cooperation must be based on zero-tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, as well as discrimination and abuse of power. Appropriate action must be taken in case of any such allegations.*

→ **YMCA Finland has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH).** In order to ensure that all employees and employer representatives are informed and aware of their responsibilities YMCA Finland has adopted a *Policy and guidelines for preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment*. The policy declares that all YMCA Finland employees and employer representatives are responsible for ensuring that they do not behave in a way that violates or causes offence or humiliation to any other person. YMCA Finland employees and employer representatives are expected to be sensitive not only regarding explicit words and action, but also to any other signs of possible anxiety. YMCA Finland employees and employer representatives are also responsible for reporting any misconduct observed. The same is expected from the partners. The full document includes the definitions of key PSEAH terminology, code of conduct, grievance procedures in case of allegations and a complaints mechanism.

In addition, YMCA Finland's *Working with Children and Young People's Policy and Procedures (WCYPPP)* document, adopted in 2017, provides the basis and defines the principles which inform how we engage and work with children and young people. It also describes the anticipated good practice and minimum standards of practice which those working for, and on behalf of YMCA Finland national office should strive to achieve. YMCA Finland partners commit themselves to follow these guidelines when partnership agreements are signed.