



Equality policy

Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce and eliminating any form of discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

SLURC - in providing services and facilities - is also committed against any discrimination of research or training participants, contractors or the public.

While the legislation in relation to equality is inadequate in Sierra Leone - the Constitution prohibits discrimination (Article 27) but it narrows its grounds down to race, tribe, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour and creed (notably disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity are missing) - and there is no domestic legislation specifically addressing non-discrimination in employment, Sierra Leone is party to five UN treaties* that are relevant to equality and SLURC always aims to follow best practice.

Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment or work placements, whether temporary, as intern, part-time or full-time
- not discriminate against protected characteristics of age, disability, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic, tribal or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

SLURC commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- this commitment includes informing all employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help SLURC provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination

*Internat. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Intl. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).



- all staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, research or training participants and partners, suppliers and the public
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination by fellow employees, research and training participants and partners, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of SLURC's work activities

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the SLURC's disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations.

- make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of SLURC
- decisions concerning staff being based on merit and performance
- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy
- monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues

The equality policy is fully supported by senior management and the Management Board and an Action plan will be drawn up to implement the policy in the various areas of SLURC's work.

Signature:

Dr Joseph Macarthy
Executive Director
SLURC