

EMS GENDER POLICY

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1. BIBLICAL ASPECTS AND BASIC PRINCIPLES

The New Testament states: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28) As Christians, we believe that God created human beings equal. In Christ, we know that we are supposed to overcome unjust structures. Therefore, the EMS Fellowship has committed itself to strive for a just community of all people and in all generations:

“In the composition of the governing bodies and other bodies, the aim shall be a balanced representation of men and women, ordained and lay people, and different age groups.” (§6 (2) EMS Constitution)

“Our witness finds expression in signs of living solidarity. As reconciling and healing communities we share life, also suffering. We strive for human rights. We also strive for a just community of women and men and in all generations.” (EMS Theological Guidelines)

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

In the EMS Fellowship, gender justice is not just one specific area of activity but a crosssectional task that should be reflected in all programmes across all core areas. Together, we seek the best ways to implement this concern.

EMS accepts the challenge of implementing gender justice in intercultural dimensions. Courage is necessary not only to question things we take for granted, but also to deal with the question of justice within an intercultural dialogue. “As a forum for ecumenical living in our common witness across borders, our fellowship enables us to learn from each other, to encourage each other, and to challenge each other.” (EMS Theological Guidelines)

Implementation requires a gender-differentiated analysis of the respective field of action and the political will and preparedness to act at all levels. It requires the development of gender competence of all persons. Gender aspects must be taken into account in the conscious planning of measures, in gender-sensitive budgeting and in the evaluation of programmes and projects. Equitable gender representation must be ensured in all areas.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

Gender and Decision Making

Decisions are not gender-neutral and a gender-neutral reality does not exist. Therefore, a well-balanced composition of decision-making bodies, committees and working groups is indispensable.

The inclusion of the expertise and potential of a wide diversity of people introduces different perspectives, increases satisfaction with the cooperation and verifiably leads to better results. Groups with a balanced composition of participants produce more comprehensive solutions. EMS is therefore promoting a culture of cooperation and decision-making that assures equal participation.

Gender and Communication

Gender-just communication is a basic requirement in all EMS media. This requires raising people's awareness with regard to the gender-sensitive usage of language and images in all media produced within the EMS Fellowship. It must be specifically clear who is addressed and directly approached. Consideration must be given that people use communication media differently. It should be made clear how the message considers the different situations of people.

Gender and Finance

Financial decisions have a profound influence on fair participation by everyone. In order to achieve gender justice at all levels of an organisation, it is indispensable to apply the appropriate tools in the field of budgeting (gender-sensitive budgeting). The objective is to achieve a gender-just distribution of resources and eliminate existing gender-specific discrimination.

Before embarking on financial planning, the current situation must be analysed from a gender perspective. With regard to gender equality, clear objectives must be defined and the necessary resources made available for implementation. Gender-orientated monitoring is required to ensure implementation of the planned measures. Defining clear objectives with measurable targets and verifiable indicators is necessary to implement a continuous evaluation system.

Gender and Personnel

Equal treatment and equal pay are fundamental rights of all employees. To eliminate any inequalities that may exist, the skills of all staff members must be improved by means of staff development measures. In the field of personnel planning, special attention shall be given to attributes that are traditionally linked to women and men. Family-friendly working conditions must be guaranteed.

Gender and Programmes/Projects

The establishment of gender justice is the aim of all programmes and projects, as this is a key for the common objectives of church activities: to live a life in human dignity. Implementing the gender policy is therefore an integral part and criterion to ensure the success of every programme.

Gender Mainstreaming is implemented as a tool to ensure the promotion of inclusiveness. This means that programmes and projects are systematically examined during the planning process, implementation and evaluation with regard to the involvement of all people and their impacts on different genders. In the selection, implementation and evaluation of projects, EMS shall initiate the promotion of gender justice, offer counselling to its members and project partners (cf. Policy on Financial Support for Projects and Programmes in the EMS Fellowship). The diversity of gender realities, requirements and access to the programme's topics shall be taken

into consideration. Resources with regard to time, staff, funding and training methods shall be provided, giving equal consideration to different interests in the programmes.

Gender and Education

EMS shall initiate ecumenical learning processes based on the principles of intercultural, inter-contextual and gender-just learning with respect given to cultural differences. In the field of education, gender-related differences become obvious in different areas. These differences, e.g. with regard to learning mechanisms, behaviour in communication and in groups, must be taken into account in educational programmes. The persons planning, carrying out and evaluating educational events and processes shall give intensive consideration to the gender dimension.

Gender-sensitive methodology, the consideration of gender-specific behaviour of leaders and participants, addressing gender topics and promoting gender-sensitive general conditions for events and workshops are important tools to implement gender-just educational programmes.

Gender and Youth

Many of the topics addressed in this policy also apply to children and young people, e.g. the need for gender-appropriate communication, fair consideration in financial decisions, targetgroup orientation in programmes and projects and, in particular, the area of education.

When working with children and young people, it is particularly important that the wellbeing and the vulnerability of children and young people are taken into account. All forms of gender-based violence must be absolutely excluded. EMS shall ensure that child work and youth work take place in an environment where children and young people are protected and have the opportunity to address sensitive questions. All people have the same rights. This also applies when working with children and young people. It is an important task in child and youth work to sensitise participants to gender issues and to teach them how to treat each other with equal respect.

Gender and Personal Encounters

Within its fellowship, EMS supports direct partnership relations between districts and congregations. These activities embrace the supervision, counselling and qualification of partnership groups, preparing and producing travel and visitor programmes as well as regular partnership workshops.

In providing its support for ecumenical partnership groups and personal encounters, EMS tries to raise sensitivity to the gender situation of all parties concerned. It supports the perception and reflection of gender relationships in different cultures and strengthens the ability to distinguish between differences and injustice in gender relationships. In the same way, EMS raises people's awareness with regard to gender justice during official trips. It is essential to perceive people within the entirety of their reality, including gender aspects.

The EMS Gender Policy is supplemented by the following documents which are available from the Secretariat:

- Questionnaires on gender justice for all fields of activities
- Gender-sensitive budgeting

For Additional Information

- Acting Against Gender-Based Violence. Our Voices 2022/2023. Published by EMS Women's Network, 2023
- Mission and Gender – Perspectives on Good Practice. Published by Gabriele Mayer and Ulrike Schmidt-Hesse (EMS), 2011 (ISBN 978-3-9814756-0-9)

The issue of “Gender and violence” is dealt with in the EMS Safeguarding Policy.

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