

## Balloon Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

### Policy Statement

Our mission is to reduce poverty through job creation in East Africa. A commitment to equality and diversity is therefore at the centre of our work. We aim to create equality in our workplace and in the work we do.

We will not accept unfair discrimination or less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity or trade union activity as an employer or in the running of our organisation. (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)

### Definition and Scope

**Diversity:** is used to describe the process of valuing differences in individuals' attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences. Diversity recognises and celebrates difference as something which is positive and beneficial to us all.

**Equality:** is about making sure that people are treated fairly and given fair chances. It is not about treating everyone the same. Achieving equality of outcomes means meeting different needs in different ways. When mentioned in policies the word equality usually implies a focus on those characteristics covered by legislation.

**Equity:** This means that the exercise of human rights leads to outcomes which are fair and just.

The policy applies to all who work with or represent Balloon. All employees and volunteers are personally responsible for the practical application of the policy, but Balloon acknowledges that specific responsibilities fall upon employees professionally involved in recruitment and people management.

### Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to create an organisation where;

- Everyone involved is able to give of their best.
- Decisions are fair and based on merit, competence and potential.
- In our work we take account of individuals' experiences and needs.
- Unfair discrimination is not tolerated.

We understand that to do this we need to address the root causes and impacts of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as the indirect discrimination that can unintentionally arise from our policies, practices and procedures.

### Through this policy we also aim to;

- Attract and retain, staff, volunteers, Board members and anyone who acts in our name that reflect the diverse communities in which we operate and who are committed to our equality principles.

- Build an organisational culture that is tolerant, open and inclusive and where people feel safe, where differences are accepted, engagement is apparent and the contributions of all are encouraged, valued and respected.
- Mainstream equality into every aspect of our work including employment and support to small businesses in East Africa.

**The organisation commits to:**

- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation'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.
- Fairly recruit, train and promote on the basis of ability.
- 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 the organisation.
- Apply fair and equitable pay and remunerations systems
- decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- 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 this policy.
- Monitor the impact on businesses we support.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and acting to address any issues.

All employees, volunteers and those who act in our name must:

- Be familiar with and promote the policy
- Demonstrate consideration, respect and understanding for all colleagues
- Challenge and report the unacceptable behaviour of others
- Recognise the value of social and cultural diversity in the workplace
- Ensure that their own behaviour at work does not unfairly discriminate

- Not engage in any behaviour which could be considered to be bullying or harassment

Any employee or volunteer who believes that Balloon has applied inequitable treatment to him or her within the scope of the policy should raise the matter through the Balloon Grievance Policy.

#### **Related policies**

- Safeguarding and Child protection
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-Bullying
- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Sexual Harassment and Assault
- Health and Safety.

#### **Reviews**

All documents are reviewed annually at the same time  
Policies apply to the Balloon group of companies  
Last Annual Update December 2019