

240 – UEM Gender Policy



GENDER POLICY TOWARDS MORE JUSTICE IN THE UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION (approved by Council 03/2014)

1. Basis of the Gender Policy

Human beings both male and female were created in the image of God (Gen. 1 and 2) God blessed them both. The purpose of God in creating both male and female in his image is to give both of them the responsibility to take care of all creation. Despite some differences in talents and physical appearance, men and women have a special solidarity expressed through covenantal formula: “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23)

“God created us human beings with many differences and granted us the gift of unity” (Gal.3:28-29). One of the main differences that determine us as individuals and in community is our gender and the roles associated with it. And indeed, these roles do determine and shape an individual’s life to a great extent. On the other hand, gender roles differ in different contexts, so that every man and woman finds him/herself in a dynamic and diverse set up of expectations.

In UEM, we regard our differences as richness of gifts and talents which helps us towards a better and deeper understanding of God’s will and of our role in the church and in the mission. However we are also aware that gender has been misused and caused oppression and violence. Therefore, gender roles and factors determining them need to be reflected and discussed, and adequate forms of working and cooperation must be developed.

The “glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom. 8) liberates us to make the best use of our diversity to become wholesome individuals and communities.

2. What are Gender Justice and Mainstreaming in UEM?

Gender justice means that in all programs, projects and activities, the different life situations and interests of men and women are implied and constantly considered, taking into account that these develop in a dynamic way. Gender justice includes numerical balance and ensures responsible stewardship of the different existing talents resources and gifts. The vision is a society without any gender related barriers.

Gender mainstreaming is a process to generate sensitivity and consciousness on gender among all members working in the UEM and to ensure that in all programs, decisions and activities of UEM, gender justice is sought.

3. Procedures and Tasks

The gender mainstreaming concerns the UEM as a whole, which means that all elements of gender justice shall be considered in the following aspects:

3.1 Theology and Spirituality

- **Action Field:**
 - Theological educational programs in UEM and its members
- **Objectives:**
 - To have biblical basis and theological understanding of gender justice
- **Instruments:**
 - Giving all members equal chances to witness for Christ
 - Re-reading the Bible with gender awareness and sensitivity of gender related images.
 - Re-discovering inclusive and liberating texts in the Bible.

- Analysing and re-formulating liturgies to be more theologically sound and gender sensitive (e.g. marriage liturgy).
- Analysing the rites, traditions and cultures in the church and society to eliminate injustices (e.g. widow rites).

3.2 Education and Training

- **Action Field:**
 - All ecumenical, inter-cultural, inter-contextual, inter-generational and gender learning activities
- **Objectives:**
 - To ensure that gender justice is observed in all learning mechanisms, behaviours and methodologies
- **Instruments:**
 - Gender Training for the facilitators of seminars and workshops
 - Promoting Gender sensitive methodologies
 - Learning about Gender specific behaviours of leaders and participants
 - Addressing Gender related themes and topics
 - Promoting Gender sensitive conditions for events/workshops
 - Encouraging training institutions to include Gender Studies in their curriculum

3.3 Partnership

- **Action Field:** Partnership relations between districts, churches, institutions and congregations in their various activities
- **Objectives**
 - To understand gender related situations of the partners
 - To achieve adequate perceptions and reflections of gender-diversity relationship in different contexts, cultures and religions
 - To overcome clichés
 - To distinguish between differences and injustices in gender relationships
 - To understand the role models concerning women and men in finances, business and success
- **Instruments**
 - Ensuring that the issue of gender justice is observed in the discussions among partners
 - Striving to maintain gender sensitive composition of visiting delegations
 - Taking into consideration the partnership guidelines and special hints on Partnership and Gender

3.4 Project and Program

- **Action Field:**
 - Projects and programs in which UEM is involved in any way
- **Objective**
 - To ensure the establishment of gender justice in the selection, financing and facilitation of the projects/programs
- **Instruments**
 - Implementing gender budgeting and planning with regards to projects and programs
 - Promoting and supporting projects which specifically address gender justice issues.
 - Supporting and financing leadership development of women
 - Cooperating with other organizations which deal with gender justice issues.
 - Evaluating continuously the programs with regards to gender justice.

3.5 Communication , Publication and Fundraising

- **Action Field**
 - Publications and media produced by the UEM
 - Internal and external communications
- **Objective**
 - To ensure gender sensitive presentation of UEM in all forms of publications, communications and fund raising
- **Instruments:**
 - Promoting and monitoring to ensure gender sensitive use of language, illustrations, pictures, and photos
 - Ensuring gender balance selection of themes, authors and media channels

- Minimizing generalizations/stereotypes and focus on facts and correct information
- Create a forum for exchange of stories and experiences

3.6 Personnel

- **Action Field**
 - Staff recruitment and development of personnel
- **Objective**
 - To make use of the competences of men and women as workers of UEM
- **Instruments**
 - Constantly analysing how men and women participate in staff development measures.
 - Creating awareness of staff on gender mainstreaming
 - Offering different models of working time (e.g. job sharing, flexibility model)
 - Striving for gender balance in all levels of employment in UEM
 - Identify contact persons as a support to develop perspectives (work/training) for the accompanying spouses in the personnel exchange.
 - Identify and exchange of resource persons who are experts on Gender among churches.

3.7 Budget and Finance

- **Action Field**
 - Strategic budgeting and financial planning
- **Objectives**
 - To achieve gender justice in distribution of resources
 - To implement the guidelines of gender budgeting in the finance structure of UEM
- **Instruments**
 - Providing resources for implementation of gender justice
 - Ensuring gender justice in budgeting and remuneration

3.8 Governance

- **Action Field**
 - GA, Regional Assembly, Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups of UEM
- **Objectives**
 - To ensure a gender inclusive composition in decision making structures
 - To create an atmosphere which makes an equal participation possible
- **Instruments**
 - Standing orders which guarantee an adequate representation of men and women
 - Overcoming imbalance and deficiencies by offering training opportunities for elected members
 - Attracting competent candidates, both male and female
 - Striving gender balance in election processes
 - Ensuring gender sensitive communication and meeting styles