



## VAAN MUHIL TRUST

### DIVERSITY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND ANTI – DISCRIMINATION POLICY

#### Policy Statement

- Indian constitution encapsulates social safeguard measures for all citizens of India in Article 15 and Article 16. Article 15 mandates prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- Article 16 mandates equal opportunity in matters of public employment. Article 16(2) further states that no citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.
- Vaan Muhil Trust has endeavored to capture the spirit of the above constitutional provisions and national and statues in Diversity, Equal Opportunity and Anti-discrimination Policy. Vaan Muhil Trust is committed to promoting equal employment opportunities and diversity and a workplace that is free of all forms of discrimination. Equal Opportunity means that all staff experience fairness, impartiality and equal access to all career initiatives in the organization.
- Vaan Muhil Trust's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity promotes an inclusive work environment that values and accepts the diverse cultural and social backgrounds of its staff. This diversity, Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy is consistent with the Vaan Muhil's pursuit of excellence. This policy is underpinned by a set of values and key guiding principles in the building of a community of all staff, all inclusive.

#### Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Diversity, Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy are to ensure that all:

1. Vaan Muhil's staff do not suffer unfair discrimination in the workplace. Individuals and groups within Vaan Muhil work in an environment where all decisions are free of discrimination, where they have equal opportunity based on relevant abilities and merit.
2. Staff are encouraged to take positive action towards promoting diversity, equal opportunity throughout the organization.
3. Personnel actions, such as compensation, benefits, transfers, and training programs, will be administered on a non-discriminatory basis. Application of labour laws to be uniformly applied in the organization.

## **Provision of Services**

It refers to the principle which ensures that all Vaan Muhil Staff are treated equitably and fairly, regardless of their caste, sex or disability. Everyone has an equal chance when applying for jobs or promotions, training opportunities and in their working conditions. The following activities shall be conducted in a uniform manner-

- Recruitment procedure and selection criteria, for appointment or engagement of a person as a staff;
- Promotion and transfer of a staff;
- Training and staff development for a staff; and
- Terms of employment or any other staff related activity.

## **Diversity and Equal Opportunity**

Vaan Muhil is an equal opportunity employer and it seeks and selects resourceful staff from diverse socio-economic background maintaining diversity. Special efforts will be taken to include the staff from marginalized communities.

All recruitments will be based on predetermined specific positions and competencies.

At least 50 % of the posts including managerial will be reserved for women.

Vaan Muhil will not tolerate any unlawful acts of discrimination, any form of harassment, any unjustifiable acts of discrimination on any grounds including: colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, social class or age.

Any breach of this policy will be subject to Vaan Muhil's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## **Workplace Discrimination**

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfavorably because of a certain attribute.

Discrimination may involve some or all of the following:

- Conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive or disruptive, including sexual harassment
- Making offensive 'jokes' about another worker's clan, ethnic background, colour, sex or disability
- Expressing negative stereotypes about particular groups.
- Judging someone on their political or religious beliefs rather than their work performance.

Using selection processes based on irrelevant attributes such as ethnic or clan group, age, sex or disability rather than on knowledge, skills and merit.

## **Parameters of Discrimination - Strictly Prohibited**

Vaan Muhil staff shall strive to create a workplace that is free from discrimination in their employment practices against any potential or existing employees, and shall not discriminate on a person's:

- Age or other circumstances, Colour, Educational Background, Physical features, Marital status
- Cultural or social beliefs such as religious, race, ethnicity or nationality
- Spiritual, traditional or customary beliefs
- Political opinion, Gender identity and expression, Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy or judging the impacts of potential pregnancy on decisions
- Health or physical disability or impairment

## **Complaint process and procedures**

A person wishing to make a complaint of discrimination can consult and file a complaint with the Diversity, Equal opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Committee. The complaint should be made in writing and addressed to chairperson of the committee within 10 working days of any such incident of discrimination.

- Executive Director will be the head of the "Anti-discrimination, Equal opportunity and Diversity Committee"
- Two Members from Middle Level Management [One Female and One Male]

## **Investigation**

Once a complaint has been filed an investigation will be undertaken immediately. In instances where there is an alleged respondent, the respondent will be notified immediately. The complainant and the respondent will both be interviewed along with any individuals who may be able to provide relevant information.

Where the alleged discrimination is an organizational practice or procedure, that practice or procedure will be investigated immediately. Where the investigation finds systemic discrimination within the organization, that practice or procedure will be changed promptly.

## **Mediation**

Vaan Muhil supports resolving matters through mediation provided that it is consistent with organizational duties, obligations and needs. Mediation can only be undertaken voluntarily. If both parties agree to participate, matters may be resolved through mediation in the following circumstances. Once the matter has been investigated and Vaan Muhil has determined the facts of the case, the organization may use mediation to develop appropriate

solutions to the complaint; and, in rare instances, where the incident is an isolated event and the parties do not dispute the facts, Vaan Muhil will act diligently to ensure that matters are dealt with in a manner that ensures the safety and protection of everyone.

Vaan Muhil will investigate all complaints immediately and will work towards the prompt resolution and prevention of discriminatory acts and practices. The first round of investigation and conclusion shall be arrived at within 10 working days from the date of filing of the complaint. All complaints will be investigated in the same manner with the aim of promoting fairness and equality.

### **Confidentiality and the Rights to Privacy**

Vaan Muhil will preserve the confidentiality of all individuals involved in a discrimination complaint. The preservation of confidentiality may be affected by the employer's duty to prevent discrimination in/at Vaan Muhil and by the alleged respondent's right to know the nature of the complaint made against them and who has made it so that they can respond.

If the investigation fails to find evidence to support the complaint, no documentation concerning the complaint will be placed on the file of the respondent. Vaan Muhil will retain all documentation for 12 months for informational purposes in the event that there is an internal appeal or a complaint filed with an outside agency.

### **Outcomes and Remedies**

Vaan Muhil will act swiftly to ensure that the discriminatory practice is stopped as soon as possible and may remedy the situation in a number of ways. Where the investigation determines that discrimination has occurred or the matter has been successfully mediated, outcomes may include moving the respondent to another department, changing the respondent's job duties, or a letter of apology. Actions taken to remedy a discriminatory situation should not have a negative effect on the complainant. The main concerns of the employer will be to ensure that the discrimination ends and to restore workplace harmony.

### **Appeal Process**

Within 10 days from the result of first round of investigation, either the complainant or the respondent may make a written request that an investigation be reviewed stating which aspect of the investigation is inadequate. The request must be submitted to the Executive Director who will determine if the investigation is to be re-opened in order to address the concerns raised. In case the appeal is taken up, then the investigation shall be completed within 15 working days by the same committee with the inclusion of an independent member. The result of the appeal shall be binding on the complainant for all purposes.