



World YWCA Whistle-blowing Policy

Purpose

The World YWCA is entrusted with funds from various donors designated to supporting young women's leadership and the growth of the YWCA movement. It follows that it is the World YWCA's overriding duty to manage these funds responsibly including proactively protecting those funds from abuse or misdirection so that they can reach their intended destinations for their intended purposes.

The main purpose of this whistle-blowing policy is to help the World YWCA to exercise its duty of trust to protect its funds and to protect employees from behaviour that does not adhere to the World YWCA's core values or Code of Conduct. The policy applies to World YWCA stakeholders, including staff, Board members, member associations and partners.

Therefore, this document sets out the organisation's whistle-blowing policy, consisting of effective and confidential procedures for reporting possible misconduct or irregularities so that appropriate remedial action can be taken.

Definitions

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It can be classified as grand or petty, depending on the amounts of money lost¹. **Fraud** is defined as knowing misrepresentation of the truth or concealment of a material fact to induce another to act to their detriment. Consequently, fraud includes any intentional or deliberate act to deprive someone else of money or other valuable possession by deception, or other unfair means.² Fraud is categorised as gross **misconduct**, which means that it is an act serious enough to warrant immediate dismissal from employment.

To blow the whistle is to alert a third party that a person or entity has done, or is doing, something wrong. So, literally, "**whistle-blowing**" means that a party, in good faith, conveys or transmits a concern, allegation or information indicating that a prohibited practice including those defined above, is occurring or has occurred at the World YWCA or affiliated organisations. By blowing the whistle on misconduct in an organisation, one alerts the organization to the fact that its stakeholders are being wrongfully put at risk or have been, or are being, harmed.

All World YWCA stakeholders, including staff, Board members, member associations and partners, have a duty to report misconduct occurring in relation to any of the World YWCA's activities. Article 102(2) of the Swiss Criminal Code states that, in addition to the primary perpetrator – the employing company may also be penalised for the offence if it "can be held responsible for failing to take all the organizational measures that were reasonably required in order to prevent such an offence".

Whistle-blower protection is integral to fostering transparency, promoting integrity, and detecting misconduct. Evidence shows that corruption, fraud, and wrongdoing, as well as health and safety violations, are much more likely to occur in organisations that are closed and secretive. Often employees are aware of wrongdoing, but feel unable to speak out due to fear of reprisals, concern

¹ Transparency International

² Association of Certified Fraud Examiners

about acting against the organisational culture, or a lack of confidence that the matter will be taken seriously. Effective whistle-blower protection supports employees in “blowing the whistle” on corruption, fraud or wrongdoing, and promotes a culture of accountability and integrity in both public and private institutions, and encourages the reporting of misconduct, fraud and corruption.

Misconduct
Fraud
Corruption

Scope

This policy applies to all staff of the World YWCA and those of partner organisations who are in a long-term (contracts for over one year) relationship with the World Office. The policy covers the responsibility to report wrongful acts committed by staff and those of partner organisations. Wrongful acts in this sense are described as;

Financial and procedural malpractice including those relating to mismanagement, misappropriation of funds, actual or suspected fraud or abuse of authority.

Under this policy, it will be a disciplinary matter if a genuine whistle-blower were to be victimised. While the policy does not specifically cover ex-employees of the organisation, reports received from ex-employees will be considered for investigation. Members of staff are however encouraged to report any wrongful act whilst still in the employment of the organisation.

Procedure

It is an obligation for all World YWCA staff to report wrongful acts or suspected wrongful acts in accordance with this Whistle-Blowing policy. Members of staff of partner organisations are also required to report such acts committed by World YWCA or their own staff in the execution of their partnership agreements. Reports can be made as follows;

Any World YWCA employee who observes any improper practice or wrongful conduct at the World Office should report such cases to the General Secretary. Where the alleged wrongdoing relates to the conduct of the General Secretary, the case should be reported to the World YWCA Board President.

Confidentiality

Cases may be reported on a confidential basis, and it is the duty of the General Secretary or Board President and all others required to be involved, that the confidentiality of the reports be kept to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Cases

When the General Secretary or Board President receives a report, they will acknowledge receipt of the report within seven business days. All reports should be properly investigated by a committee set up by management or an auditor where applicable. Upon investigation, management should take the appropriate corrective action warranted by the outcome of the investigation, including reporting the case to the police and taking legal action where necessary. The Finance and Operations Senior Specialist and the Strategic Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation Lead should be notified of the outcome of an investigation.



There may be occasions when external bodies such as donors and regulators will be notified of the outcome of an investigation. The whistle-blower should also be notified of the outcome of an investigation. On an annual basis, issues raised through whistle-blowing will be tracked and reported to the Board.

False Allegations

Any allegation which proves to have been maliciously or knowingly false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offence. Any personal interest should be made known when first raising concerns.

Notification

All supervisors and human resource personnel are required to notify and communicate the existence and contents of this policy to the employees of their department and all new employees respectively.

Supervisors and department or functional leaders should also ensure that long-term partners are made aware of their responsibility to report any wrongful conduct of World YWCA staff in the execution of a partnership agreement.