

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

February 2025

Purpose

This purpose of this policy is to guide The BEARR Trust in promoting equity, valuing diversity and creating an inclusive environment. It applies to all The BEARR Trust's activities and informs our ways of working with employees, volunteer and partner organisations in receipt of BEARR grants and other support.

Definition of equity, diversity and inclusion

Equity, diversity and inclusion are defined as follows¹:

Equity means treating people in ways that make sure they are not unfairly prevented from accessing resources and opportunities. 'Equity' is different from 'equality', because it recognises that providing the same thing to everyone is insufficient to overcome the barriers to access that some people may face.

Diversity means having differences within an organisation or setting. People with differing identities, backgrounds and experiences should all have equitable access to resources and decision-making.

Inclusion means taking action to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate.

Policy statement

The BEARR Trust seeks to support civil society organisations (CSOs) working with vulnerable people in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. As part of this mission, we are committed to:

- Promoting the dignity and basic rights of every person
- Supporting the development of strong and cohesive communities, in which community capacity is strengthened, and in which all people are valued and have a stake
- Recognising differences between individuals and respecting the talent and contribution of all people

The BEARR Trust respects the diversity of all employees, prospective employees, volunteers, partners, beneficiaries, contractors and suppliers. It treats them fairly and equally regardless of characteristics including those Protected Characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act². This applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment and selection and terms and

¹ This definition draws on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (August 2021), [Getting Started with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

² The Protected Characteristics within the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

conditions. It also applies to ways of working with volunteers and supporters and how we treat our partners.

The political, economic and cultural context for equity, diversity and inclusion varies in the different countries in which The BEARR Trust operates. This means that people face different legal and practical barriers based on their race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, faith and other characteristics. In supporting vulnerable people in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus we seek to empower CSOs to challenge discrimination and to promote inclusion within the local context in which they are working.

BEARR Trust commitments

As an **employer**, The BEARR Trust will:

- Ensure that recruitment processes are fair and consistent
- Ensure all employees are managed in a fair and equitable way
- Provide a safe and accessible working environment that values the requirements of the individual and is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Ensure that all those working for The BEARR Trust are managed in a fair and equitable way
- Promote opportunities for a healthy work life balance.

As an organisation which involves **volunteers**, The BEARR Trust will:

- Seek to attract a diverse range of volunteers by making information about volunteering opportunities widely available and by managing volunteers in a fair and equitable way.
- Provide a safe and accessible environment that values the requirements of the individual and is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Communicate with volunteers on a regular basis and give them opportunities to express concerns

In working with **partners and external** stakeholders, The BEARR Trust will:

- Provide financial support through our Small Grants Scheme to CSOs that seek to positively promote equity, diversity and inclusion, especially among groups that face discrimination or are marginalised.
- Facilitate the exchange of good practice and mutual support among CSOs, to enhance their ability to promote equity, diversity and inclusion, including through conferences, webinars and information exchange.
- Carry out proportionate due diligence and monitoring to ensure that projects delivered by those CSOs that we support financially are in accordance with our Policy Statement. We recognise that the majority of the organisations with which we work are small, community-led groups working in a range of cultural contexts: our focus is on developing the principles

of equity, diversity and inclusion and encouraging improvement, rather than on formal 'compliance'.

- Seek the views of partners, especially those partners that are based in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, as we develop our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure that information about The BEARR Trust is accessible to a range of audiences. This includes making sure that the process of applying to The BEARR Trust for grant support is simple and understandable.

The BEARR Trust will also:

- Develop our Trustee Board over time, attracting Trustees with a variety of backgrounds and experiences.
- Report on progress against our Policy Statement within every Annual Report.

Responsibility and oversight

All Trustees, employees and volunteers with The BEARR Trust are responsible for upholding our equity, diversity and inclusion Policy Statement. The Policy Statement will also be reflected in grant agreements with third party organisations.

Where an individual or group believe that they are experiencing treatment that is not in keeping with the Policy Statement or its spirit, they should raise the matter with the Chairman of The BEARR Trust. Any concerns should be considered by the Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

Employees should raise concerns through the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Review

The BEARR Trust is committed to continuous improvement. This policy will be reviewed by Trustees at least annually and will be supplemented with process notes and best practice as appropriate..

Original policy: October 2022

Reviewed and updated: May 2024

Reviewed: February 2025