

## WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that every human being is entitled to from the moment they are born until they die. At Travelife, we expect our members to follow the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR). It consists of 30 basic rights that every human being should enjoy. You can [click here](#) to read the full declaration while below we provide a summary of its main points for Travelife Members. The United Nations has also established special rights for children and indigenous peoples which are also expected to be respected by Travelife Members. In addition, you can find further guidance in relation to these rights in the 'Members' Area'.

## WHO DO THEY APPLY TO?

They apply to every human being, but there are certain groups that Travelife members are expected to pay special attention to:

- To your staff – permanent and temporary, full-time, part-time and/or casual as well as people on a project contract
- In your local community
- To your customers
- To your suppliers and subcontractors, including the staff they employ

You should still pay special attention to groups of people in your community who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Such populations may be:

- The children
- People living in poverty and the homeless
- The elderly
- The women
- Minority groups (ethnic, religious, etc.)
- People with disabilities or illnesses
- People who are not part of the local community and/or do not speak the local language

## WHICH AREAS OF YOUR BUSINESS DO YOU COVER?

Respecting human rights and ensuring fair working conditions are essential elements for a business to be more sustainable and you should give these issues the same importance as your environmental work. As part of your Travelife certification, you must ensure the respect and protection of human rights in all of the following areas of your business:

- Recruitment of staff - either directly or through agencies
- Terms and conditions of employment – especially regarding wages, hours, overtime and rest days (rest days)
- General working conditions
- Staff career development, including training opportunities
- Suppliers and subcontractors
- Community involvement and support
- Your customers and staff - how they are treated and how they treat others
- Staff training on human rights and child protection
- Communication with customers
- In your internal reports
- In your public policies and reports
- In environmental management
- The use of cultural elements in your business from local indigenous communities, such as art, entertainment, food, etc.
- The retail trade.

## HUMAN RIGHTS RELATED TO TRAVELIFE CERTIFICATION

We expect all Travelife Members to respect all 30 rights set out in the UN Declaration, however some of these are specifically covered by the Travelife Standard, so you will need to provide evidence that you comply with them in order to be certified by Travelife. These are summarized below along with how they relate to your business, the scope they cover and the relevant criterion from the Travelife Standard.

### EQUALITY

Summary of universal rights

Every person is entitled to their human rights wherever they are and cannot be treated differently because of their nationality, sex, age (although there are special rights for children), ethnicity, beliefs, thoughts and ideas, of his religion, marital status or sexual orientation

#### How this right applies to Travelife Certified Members

You may not discriminate by offering different types of accommodation or lounges, different food and drinks, different access to essential services or levels of privacy and security.

Example: You cannot put staff members of one ethnicity in inferior accommodation to members of another ethnicity.

You should pay your employees the same wages for the same work. Any differences in pay should be linked to the level of responsibility and experience associated with their work.

Example: You cannot pay a trainee maid who was born in your country more money than a trainee maid who is an immigrant.

The terms and conditions of employment must be the same for all. This includes working hours, breaks, holidays, benefits, opportunities, training, disciplinary procedures and grievance procedures. The only exception is if you legally employ minors, for whom special conditions should apply so that their schooling, health and general well-being are not affected.

Example: You cannot give men more training opportunities than women.

You cannot discriminate when hiring staff.

Example: You cannot insist (publicly or privately) that only people under the age of 30 can be receptionists.

You should treat members of the local community (locals) who are customers of your hotel the same way you treat your other customers.

Example: If your hotel restaurant serves customers from other hotels in your area, you cannot deny or restrict access to local residents.

All your customers should have equal access to your services and facilities.

Example: You cannot refuse service from your bar to people of certain nationalities.

### FREEDOM

Summary of universal rights

- Everyone is free to travel within a country, leave their country and return as they please.
- Everyone is free to enter or exit employment without penalty or reprisal.
- Everyone is free to seek legal assistance.
- Every worker is free to join a union or any other group in order to peacefully ensure that his rights are respected and to seek better working conditions.
- No one can be held against their will.
- No man can be a slave and no man can enslave another.

### HOW THIS RIGHT APPLIES TO TRAVELIFE CERTIFIED MEMBERS

You must not receive a fee of any kind from an employee to hire them or allow an employment agency to collect a fee for staff to secure or retain their employment.

Example: You must not use staffing firms that collect a commission from employees. On the contrary, you will have to pay any costs related to your recruitment.

You must not retain or detain any documents belonging to an employee that may prevent them from traveling freely within or outside your country.

Example: You should never keep original passports, visas or other travel documents.

You must not retain or retain any documents or other items belonging to an employee that may prevent them from resigning and you should ensure that the same applies to any staffing agency you work with. This includes passports, other identification documents, financial documents (including credit/debit cards), unpaid wages and personal belongings.

Example: You cannot make it difficult for employees to leave your company by withholding documents and items that belong to them or fees for accrued work.

You must never physically restrict your employees by preventing them from leaving your business structures, such as living or working areas, by locking them out or in any other way.

Example: Although it is acceptable for employees to have limited access to certain areas of the hotel (warehouses, customer areas - when off-duty - etc.), employees should be able to easily leave the areas where they live and your facilities in general.

You should allow all members of your staff to join a union or similar organisation, form their own group where they can discuss their terms and conditions of employment and address any complaints, ideas and suggestions to management without fear of retaliation.

Example: Your company's terms of employment cannot prohibit employees from joining a trade union or forming a union.

You must not prevent your staff members from reporting problematic situations or seeking assistance from local police/prosecutor authorities, or from being subject to retaliation if they report crimes against themselves or others.

Example: If an employee is assaulted by a customer, they have the right to report the incident to the police.

### STANDARD OF LIVING

Summary of universal rights

- Everyone has the right to a fair wage that will enable them to provide food, shelter, health care and education for themselves and their families and to take the opportunities in life as they wish.
- Everyone has the right to rest and relaxation from work, including paid leave.
- Employees have the right to safe working and living conditions in a clean and uncrowded environment.

How this right applies to Travelife Certified Members

You should pay all your employees a wage that is at least equal to the national or international minimum wage in your country.

Example: All people working in your premises, regardless of the form of their employment contract and their employer, should be paid at least the statutory minimum wage.

You should ensure that working hours, breaks, days off and paid leave comply with national or international standards as a minimum.

Example: If overtime is allowed, you must pay overtime or give time off for hours worked above the legal maximum, provided the employee voluntarily agrees to take time off in lieu of cash pay.

You should ensure that you provide your staff with any additional coverage and benefits required by local and international regulations, such as pension insurance, sick leave, maternity leave and so on.

Example: In the UK all employers must pay into a pension scheme for staff.

In many countries the minimum coverages required by law still do not provide a good quality of life, so Travelife Members should consider offering at least one benefit above the legally required, which will improve the quality of life of their staff.

Example: In countries where there is no free medical care, you could offer medical insurance with some significant discount or vouchers for free visits to a local clinic. In countries where good employee benefits are already provided for through national legislation, you could offer childcare vouchers or higher pension contributions.

### Advice

Travelife During the audit you may be asked to provide evidence that you comply with local or international labor laws. It is in discretion

it is up to your inspector to decide how to find this evidence, but you can prepare by making sure you can easily find all of the following documents:

- Records of working hours and wages paid
- Terms and conditions of employment signed by employees
- Evidence that you provide your employees with all their legal rights
- Evidence that you do not discriminate when hiring staff
- Evidence that all staff enjoy equal treatment
- Document containing all the labor and human rights laws you must comply with

### **ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

Summary of universal rights

- Everyone has the right to access public services in their country, such as education, health, water and sanitation.
- Everyone has the right to education and it must be free and compulsory during the basic stages.

How this right applies to Travelife Certified Members

You should ensure that your activities, including any building work or renovations, do not impede staff or the local community's access to essential services such as healthcare, education, water and sanitation.

Example: Your use of water may be reducing its availability in the local community, or your building work may be disrupting your residents' and staff's access to a local medical clinic.

You should ensure that your activities do not impede children's access to education.

Example: Promoting field trips that include visits to local schools may disrupt classes. Likewise, your work schedules may prevent parents from walking their children to and from school.

## SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 29 of the UN Universal Declaration states that every person has a duty to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

How this right applies to Travelife Certified Members

The essential services you provide to your customers, if they are not available in your local community, should be available to the local population as well.

Example: If you are in a remote area and have a medical clinic for your staff, you should offer a similar service to the locals.

You should ensure that your staff and suppliers understand the importance of respecting human rights.

Example: You could provide human rights training to all newly hired staff and include your human rights statement in your communications with your suppliers.

You should take steps to prevent exploitation and discrimination both in your hotel and in the local community.

Example: Train your staff on how to recognize and report instances of exploitation and discrimination.

You should use your influence as a business to inform third parties, such as your suppliers, customers, but also local community leaders, of the importance of respecting human rights.

Example: You can publish your human rights policy and the work you have done in this area in your public exhibitions, or add clauses in your contracts with your suppliers guaranteeing that they will respect human rights.

## RESPECT FOR PEOPLE'S PRIVACY, LIVELIHOODS, BELIEFS AND CULTURE

Summary of universal rights

- Everyone has a right to privacy where they live, within their family and in their correspondence.
- No one should be subject to attacks or accusations that may harm his reputation, everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty and has the right to defend himself against any accusations in an impartial hearing.
- Everyone has the right to own assets that they can share only if they wish.
- Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural, artistic and scientific manifestations of their community.
- Everyone is entitled to own intellectual property rights for their scientific, written or artistic creations. No one can copy or appropriate someone's original creations without their permission.

How this right applies to Travelife Certified Members

All staff must have access to toilets, showers and changing rooms that provide privacy and security. Staff accommodation rooms must have lockable doors to lock and if shared they must have a safe place for each member of staff to store their personal belongings. Staff members must be able to enjoy their stay undisturbed and any inspections must be carried out with early warning to ensure their privacy is not disturbed.

Example: You should provide a safe place for your staff members to store their personal belongings when they are on duty.

You should have procedures in place to prevent any form of abuse or harassment in the workplace and provide human rights training to your staff.

Example: You should have grievance procedures where each employee can appeal individually for any issue that concerns them, and any employees who harass or mistreat other people should face appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Your business activities should not prevent your staff or community members from practicing their cultural traditions and should protect those traditions and their way of life.

Example: Educate your customers on how to interact with local cultures respectfully.

You should respect intellectual property by not copying, appropriating, trading or otherwise using the original creations or significant artefacts of an individual or indigenous culture.

Example: Ensure that local artefacts of cultural and historical significance are not sold within your premises. Also, if you choose to incorporate elements of local art, music, or food into your business, you should seek input from representatives from the indigenous population.

## OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

What are your unique needs?

In some tourist accommodations, establishing a climate of respect and support for human rights will be a very simple process, while for others it will be more complicated. What you need to do depends on the size of your property and the destination it is installed.

For example, large firms have more influence and therefore more responsibility than small firms. Also, if you are in a remote area where the majority of residents are indigenous, you will have very different issues to consider than in a hotel located next to a major international airport. In the first case you would need to do more research on how you could protect indigenous peoples, while in the second you would focus mainly on the labor aspects of human rights.

Another important issue concerns the content of local and national legislation. For example, the European Union has many laws that protect human rights and fair working conditions. However, it remains important for EU-based properties to ensure they fully comply with the Travelife Standard. However, some aspects may be easier to comply with as local guidelines are clear and implemented.

Members in countries that do not have strong legislation should do more work on these issues by researching international guidelines and may find that laws in their country conflict with some Travelife Standard criteria. For example, Travelife states that there should be no discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation, but some countries include this discrimination in their laws. For guidance on how to handle such special issues, please contact the Travelife team in London.

What issues concern your community and staff the most?

A good policy and planning will address issues that are of unique interest to your local community and staff. For example, if medical care is extremely expensive in your area, your business may have the power to help in this area, either by subsidizing your staff's care or supporting other initiatives to address the problem.

If your staff are concerned about lack of housing or training then you should focus on supporting these areas first. The more involved your employees feel in decisions about where to direct your efforts, the more likely they, your customers, and your community will support you.

Keep records

The Travelife inspector will ask to see evidence that you comply with all the criteria of the Travelife Standard relating to human and labor rights. Make sure you have all relevant documents and records available to show.

More Information and Supporting Material

Travelife, Quick Guides: Labor and Human Rights Policy, Child Protection, Disciplinary procedures, Grievance Procedures, Avoiding Discrimination in the Workplace, Community Involvement and Empowerment Travelife, Step-by-Step Guides: Fair Labor Practices, Child Protection, Community Involvement/Empowerment [Click HERE](#) to view the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[Click HERE](#) to view the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [Click HERE](#) to view the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child [Click HERE](#) for the International Labor Organization (ILO) website where issues such as minimum wages and working hours are explained in detail.