

5. Harassment & Discrimination Policy

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email Address _____ Phone Number _____

Permanent Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

SSSA has a zero tolerance for any form of harassment and discrimination between staff, participants, students, mentors, community members and any people engaged with us during the program. The most productive and satisfying work, study, and internship environment is one in which work is accomplished in a spirit of mutual trust and respect.

All participants and staff have a right to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassing conduct, including sexual harassment. Likewise, all community members have a right to receive services and live in an environment free from discrimination and harassing conduct, including sexual harassment. Harassment on the basis of one's race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, sex, arrest or conviction record, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity or membership in the military reserve is expressly prohibited under this policy.

Definitions

Harassment is a form of discrimination that is offensive, impairs morale, undermines the integrity of work and internship relationships and causes serious harm to the productivity, efficiency and stability of our organization. Discrimination is adverse treatment of any person based on the protected class or category of persons to whom she/he belongs, rather than on the basis of his/her individual merit.

In general, harassment means persistent and unwelcome conduct or actions on any of the bases underlined above. Sexual harassment is one type of harassment and includes unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual assault is a sexual act against the will and without the consent of the victim or where the victim is a minor and/or incapable of giving consent.

This policy applies to SSSA participants, SSSA directors, project mentors, project staff and community members. For purposes of this policy:

“Participant” is any individual who has enrolled and paid tuition and fees to engage in SSSA’s summer program in Ghana.

“Directors” shall refer to both Nialena Ali and Brittini Howard, SSSA’s co-founders, co-directors and trip leaders.

“Mentors” refers to the leaders/directors of SSSA’s autonomous partner organizations that lead participant’s internship projects.

“Staff” refers to volunteers, members and personnel associated with SSSA’s partner organizations.

Recognizing Harassment

Harassment may be subtle, manipulative and is not always evident. It does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and is personally offensive. All forms of gender harassment are covered. Men can be sexually harassed; men can harass men; Women can harass other women. Offenders can be mentors, participants, co-participants, staff and non-employees such as clients or vendors. Harassment can manifest in both verbal and nonverbal forms.

Verbal

Jokes, insults and innuendoes (based on race, sex, age, disability, etc.), degrading sexual remarks, referring to someone as a stud, hunk or babe; whistling; cat calls; comments on a person’s body or sex life, or pressures for sexual favors or forms of intimacy. Racial slurs, derogatory remarks about a person’s accent, interogatory questioning of a person's religious or gender identity, or display of racially offensive symbols are all examples of verbal harassment.

Nonverbal

The following are some examples that constitute nonverbal harassment: gestures, staring, touching, hugging, patting, blocking a person's movement, standing too close, brushing against a person's body, or display of sexually suggestive or degrading pictures, racist or other derogatory cartoons or drawings. Unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact, comments, questions, advances, jokes, epithets or demands; Displays or electronic transmission of derogatory, demeaning or hostile materials; and unwillingness to train, evaluate, assist, or work with any persons based on some perceived aspect of their identity.

Sexual harassment

Is a form of harassment that consists of making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or forms of intimacy, or engaging in other verbal or physical acts of a sexual or sex-based nature especially where such conduct interferes with any person’s internship, academic or work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive living and learning environment.

Sexual harassment may also occur where a director/mentor demands that an participant/subordinate satisfy sexual demands in order to receive internship or academic benefits, to continue employment, or as a basis for making any other employment or internship decision. Such sexual harassment occurs between a director/mentor and an participant/subordinate due to the nature of the mentor/subordinate relationship. A director/mentor for this purpose is someone who can affect or impact a participant/subordinate's terms, conditions, or privileges of employment/internship/academic privileges because she/he can take or impact action such as hiring, firing, promoting, disciplining, scheduling, training, evaluating or deciding how to compensate or grade that participant/subordinate.

In the context of international volunteering, participants/subordinates may also hold a position of power or control over local students, service recipients and/or members of the host community. Therefore, sexual harassment may also occur where an participant/subordinate pressures or demands that a student/service recipient/community member satisfy sexual favors or acts of intimacy to receive services, continue engagement in a project or as a basis for making any other decision regarding their participation in a project or receiving of services.

Grievance and Reporting Procedure

Any SSSA participant who believes they are or have been harassed, or who becomes aware of harassment, should promptly notify the director(s). If the participant believes the director is the harasser, the other director should be notified. If a participant is uncomfortable discussing harassment with his or her director, any SSSA participant may make a complaint to any project mentor/leader of a partner organization.

It is imperative that all mentors and supervisory personnel promptly report any discrimination, harassment, retaliation or sexual assault that they observe, learn about from others, or reasonably suspect has occurred with respect to a participant. Likewise, it is imperative that any participant promptly report any discrimination, harassment, retaliation or sexual assault that they observe, learn about from others, or reasonably suspect has occurred with respect to a students/service recipient/community member. Upon notification of a harassment complaint, a confidential and impartial investigation will be promptly commenced and will include direct interviews with involved parties and where necessary with any persons who may be witnesses or have knowledge of matters relating to the complaint. The parties of the complaint will be notified of the findings and their options.

SSSA utilizes a "preponderance of the evidence" standard (more likely than not that a policy violation occurred) in the determination of whether this policy has been violated.

Non-retaliation

This policy prohibits retaliation of any kind against any persons bringing a complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint. Such persons may not be adversely affected in any manner related to their internship/employment. Any form of retaliation against anyone who has complained of or formally reported discrimination, harassment, or sexual assault, or has participated in an investigation of such a complaint, regardless of whether the complaint relates to the complaining person or someone else violates both this policy and applicable law. Examples of retaliation include termination, demotion, refusal to promote, or any other adverse action that would discourage a reasonable person from opposing perceived discrimination.

Non-fraternization

This policy applies to all participants, project mentors, directors and SSSA personnel. In keeping with its commitment to provide equal opportunity to participants, mentors and community members, and in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, favoritism, exploitation, harassment or breaches of professional standards, SSSA prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between participants and non-participants who are in any way associated with SSSA. This includes project mentors, non-SSSA volunteers at our partner organizations, staff members from our partner organizations, directors, community members receiving services from SSSA or SSSA's partner organizations, as well as any and all vendors hired by SSSA including but not limited to guest lecturers, hotel staff, hotel management, wait staff, drivers, art instructors, music instructors, and tour guides. Furthermore, romantic or sexual relationships between SSSA participants and any student enrolled in secondary school is strictly forbidden regardless of whether or not the student is 18 years of age or older.

Romantic relationships between SSSA participants and members of any of the above mentioned categories puts SSSA's reputation at risk, integrity into question and diverts energies and resources away from our mission. For this reason, SSSA has zero tolerance for violation of our non-fraternization policy and participants found in violation will be immediately expelled from the program. SSSA reserves the right to take other forms of disciplinary action against participants and non-participants found to be in violation of this policy. SSSA utilizes a "preponderance of the evidence" standard (more likely than not that a policy violation occurred) in the determination of whether this policy has been violated. In all such circumstances, consent by the parties may not be considered a defense against a charge of fraternization in any proceeding conducted under this policy.

Disciplinary Action

SSSA views harassment, fraternization and retaliation to be among the most serious breaches of work and study place behavior. Consequently, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action, ranging from a warning to termination to legal remedies, can be expected.

SSSA expects directors, managers, assistants, and other personnel to serve as models of appropriate conduct for participants. Likewise, SSSA expects participants to serve as models of appropriate conduct

for students and community members. Therefore, all persons affiliated with SSSA (including participants, mentors, staff, and directors) will be held to a higher standard of accountability. All persons affiliated with SSSA are expected to comply with the “do no harm” principles SSSA was founded on, which includes doing no harm to the host community that has welcomed us to conduct our studies and internships. In the field of international volunteering, it is imperative that we promote non-exploitative, mutually beneficial relationships free from any form of harassment, discrimination or sexual assault. Therefore, SSSA expects directors, mentors, participants, and other personnel not only refrain from actions that violate this policy, but also refrain from any activity that would give the appearance of impropriety.

In the instance that a participant is found to be in violation of this policy, having sexually harassed or sexually assaulted a fellow participant, local student, staff or community member, they may face the following forms of disciplinary action:

- Expulsion from the SSSA program
- An internal complaint will be filed within SSSA
- An complaint may be filed with their nation’s embassy (which may subject them to deportation orders)
- In the case they are a university student, their home institution may be notified as well

Recognizing the lack of an international regulatory board for foreign volunteers, SSSA maintains these forms of disciplinary action to prevent participants who exhibit harmful behavior from regaining similar access to vulnerable populations and victimizing more people around the globe.

SSSA is committed to enforcing this non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy and complaint procedures at all levels in order to create an environment free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and/or sexual assault.

By signing this document, I have read, understand, and agree to the terms above.

Signature _____ Date _____