

Sustainable Social Justice Policy

1. Introduction

The first of the Zebra Collective's Objects, as stated in our Articles of Association, is the pursuit of social justice.

We are actively committed to making equality, inclusion, the fair distribution of power and resources and environmental sustainability an integral and explicit part of our work.

This commitment extends to our:

- delivery work
- communication with all those we come into contact with
- awareness raising, activism and publicity
- recruitment and employment practices
- consumption, including purchasing, energy use and travel
- manner of operating as a worker co-operative

Zebra has adopted the New Economics Foundation (www.neweconomics.org) definition of sustainable social justice which is:

the fair and equitable distribution of natural, social and economic resources between people, countries and generations.

2. Social Justice and Environmental Sustainability

We address social justice and environmental sustainability within one policy because we recognise how interdependent and mutually reinforcing these two imperatives have become. For example:

- Over-consumption, and accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of the privileged few, exacerbate wholesale poverty and inequalities across the world. By the same process this also contributes to climate change, resource depletion and pollution. The negative effects of this damage to the natural environment disproportionately affects those who are most disadvantaged, marginalised and powerless to protect themselves. In turn, this results in even greater poverty, inequalities and destruction of life chances.
- As the UN Sustainable Development Goals underline, tackling the widening inequalities in and between the LEDC (less economically developed countries and MEDC (more economically developed countries), depends largely on protection of the environment and non-renewable resources and sustainable development in order to ensure the fair distribution of natural resources for current and future generations.

3. Our values and practice

Whilst sustainable social justice as a whole is a hugely complex area, we identify a number of key factors and responsibilities about which we can take action and these therefore inform our beliefs and practice.

I. Our privileged status: the location of our lives and work in the MEDC grants us an unfair proportion of the world's natural resources and privileges. Zebra believes that it is inconsistent to commit actively to equality and environmental sustainability locally whilst ignoring global inequalities – this merely serves to reinforce them through our personal and organisational place in the global economy.

Wherever possible we address and campaign against global inequalities and the exploitation of peoples and the planet and for the realisation of human rights by, for example: contributing to public discussions and debates; organising and facilitating such events; and providing relevant training. We seek to inspire and encourage people to make choices that promote sustainable social justice.

II. Intergenerational equality: The generation to which we belong is using up unprecedented quantities of the world's natural resources, in a way that will not be possible in the future. We therefore need to take an intergenerational approach to equality and ensure wherever possible to avoid the unjust transfer of environmental burdens to future generations by, for example, reducing greenhouse emissions and conserving non-renewable resources.

We actively support environmental campaigning and awareness groups by providing free or low cost facilitation and training. We provide information aimed at enabling people we work with to understand the social and environmental justice implications of the choices they make.

We support equitable and sustainable global development through, for example, our purchasing decisions and the efficient management of our carbon footprint.

We are proactive in explaining this policy to clients and encouraging their engagement with it. For example, we request they choose venues which are accessible by public transport, provide fairly traded refreshments, and take steps to minimise resource use.

III. Multiple intersections of unequal power relations: We believe that inequalities in our society are related to deeply-established social, political and economic structures and processes and to multiple intersections of unequal power relations and forms of discrimination. We believe that we should take every step possible to prevent their perpetuation and the reinforcement of the resulting inequalities and exploitation, and that we should also address and challenge these structures, processes, power relations and inequalities.

To this end, Zebra supports positive action to promote opportunities and access to people, and groups of people, who are - and may have long been - disadvantaged by society and by multiple types of discrimination.

Wherever possible Zebra seeks to increase the participation, empowerment and co-production of disadvantaged groups, and as the Objects of our Articles of Association set out, by providing training in equality, participation and positive communication; organisational support to the community and public service sector and project delivery where this contributes to social justice.

One of our most effective approaches to inspire and encourage others – and ourselves – is solution-focused communication and practice. Solution-focused principles provide a powerful means of envisioning and bringing about change, such that we can all draw on our existing strengths and resources to work, step by small step, towards sustainable social justice and making a measurable impact.

As a worker's cooperative, we also have the benefit of subscribing to cooperative values and principles which speak directly to issues of equality, equity and solidarity; and of participation in cooperative campaigns both locally and globally promoting sustainable social justice.

Zebra's non-hierarchical structure as a cooperative, shared ownership, equal-pay and consensus decision-making provides us with the opportunity to explore and model a way of working which explicitly seeks to break down structures of power and privilege. We are able to demonstrate how this offers a viable alternative which is fairer and less exploitative towards its workers and of the environment. In our commitment as an equal pay co-operative, we recognise issues of power inequality and financial inequality.

4. Our commitment to equality

Zebra acknowledges that we live in an unequal society where discrimination occurs.

Zebra is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination covered by the Act (see Appendix 1 for definitions) against people in protected groups: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and other disadvantaged groups.

For example, we promote a recovery approach to mental health and acknowledge the stigmatisation and discrimination often experienced by those with a "mental illness" diagnosis.

Whilst we are not a public body directly bound by the Equality Duty, we note its wording, and will work to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

We endeavour to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

Much of the work we do contributes to fostering good relations, and this includes both:

- Tackling prejudice, and
- Promoting understanding

We use “positive action in recruitment” powers in the legislation to create opportunities and promote diversity in Zebra as appropriate.

We recognise the validity, power and importance of the social model of disability, for example we are conscientious about our responsibility to make reasonable adjustments for employees, course participants and others. Our good practice guidelines are set out in our Accessibility Checklist.

We strive to create a culture of constructive challenge where concerns about the impact of language and practice in relation to promoting equality can be raised and resolved. This applies to concerns within the collective and those arising in our dealings with customers and others.

Where a complaint is made about an incident of discrimination (including harassment) this is taken seriously and investigated as such.

I. Our customers

Promoting equality is a key element of Zebra’s work portfolio. We provide training and advise on equality policy and practice. We also highlight the importance of equality in all other work, such as participation training and organisation development work.

Where we are not satisfied that the work we are being asked to carry out reflects a genuine commitment to equality, our preparatory work with the potential client will reflect these concerns, and we will seek to incorporate equality into the contracted work.

II. Other work

Wherever possible we support and work in partnership with other organisations who aim to promote equality.

III. Communications and accessible information

We ask all training participants to let us know about things we can do to adapt training materials for them, and will provide large print, coloured paper or electronic resources as necessary. Signers, translators and other human assistants and assistance dogs are always welcome.

Our training workshops are delivered in a variety of styles and formats to meet different needs.

We have access to a hearing loop for all training sessions.

Our website is standards compliant with valid HTML5 and CSS2.1, and accessible in all modern browsers. We have designed the site to be as intuitive and easy-to-use as possible and we invite feedback.

We aim to communicate in clear English at all times.

IV. Venues

We aim to use training and other venues that are as accessible as possible, and which meet the needs of participants and potential participants.

V. Within Zebra

Zebra seeks to recruit the best person for each position. We recognise that each worker is unique. We actively celebrate differences and seek to support each employee to fulfill their potential within Zebra.

Personal information is separated from the application for short-listing and interview. We do not specify a requirement for formal qualifications where these are not needed for the job. Where appropriate a practical skills test forms part of the selection process. During the selection process each candidate is scored against a person specification. The scoring and reasons for the decision are recorded.

Individuals are asked to identify any specific needs they may have in order to do their job and participate fully in the life of the collective. We aim to meet those needs wherever practicable.

We aim to provide flexible working conditions to enable Zebra workers to fulfill family, caring, religious or other commitments and to address health and disability-related needs.

We support each other in our individual professional development, including leadership development. All employees attend or otherwise participate in regular equality refresher training. Our equality leads participate in relevant external training and events as appropriate.

We are an equal pay, equal say collective. Each worker is (or has the opportunity to be) a co-Director of the Collective after a qualifying period. Our decisions are made

by a consensus process which includes listening to all perspectives. We have a set of Ground Rules which underpin this process.

VI. Equality monitoring

Zebra asks job applicants and others working with and for Zebra to complete an equality monitoring form and this may be used to make appropriate adaptations, and will be recorded in our social accounts.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability

Zebra is committed to minimising our negative impact and maximising our positive impact wherever possible on the distribution of natural resources.

In continuously developing and implementing this policy, Zebra recognises the differing circumstances and needs of individual employees, and weighs these against environmental considerations (e.g. a worker whose mobility is limited may need to drive a car to properly carry out their work duties).

I. Purchasing

In decisions around purchasing supplies we take account of ethical and environmental considerations such as conditions of production, working conditions and fair wages, the methods of production, source of materials, waste by-products and how they are disposed of and intergenerational equality implications of excessive resource use.

Zebra is a Fairtrade organisation, making every effort to purchase all its requirements from Fairtrade sources. We are aware that this is just one of many efforts that can be made to address global inequality, and we continually actively explore other possibilities.

We subscribe to Ethical Consumer, and use this as a comprehensive and up-to-date guide on our purchasing decisions.

Where possible we also endeavour to purchase supplies and services from: within the cooperative sector; local businesses; social enterprises.

Zebra adopts the principle of “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle”, using the minimum necessary to produce excellent training materials, reusing materials and recycling where possible, e.g. emailing course hand-outs and other documents where possible, printing two pages to a sheet, printing double sided, reusing paper and envelopes, recycling print cartridges and decommissioned office equipment, purchasing recycled stationery and other materials where these are available.

II. Energy use and travel

We aim to keep our use of energy to a minimum:

- In the office – by economical office procedures such as using energy saving settings on computers/switching off or hibernating when not in use, choosing equipment that uses minimal energy

- Travelling: walking, cycling or using public transport wherever possible.
- We choose venues that are accessible by public transport, foot and bike, and give participants the information and support to choose these options.
- We facilitate lift-sharing arrangements where using public transport isn't practical.

III. Food purchasing

Where possible and available we purchase:

- locally produced food because it reduces the distance travelled by food and supports local businesses.
- Fairtrade food and drink, where available, because it contributes to the wellbeing of farmers and other producers overseas
- vegetarian food, to reflect our commitment to animal welfare, and because it minimises impact on climate, water resources and habitat globally
- locally produced organic dairy produce instead of non-organic globally traded equivalents, for environmental and animal welfare reasons.

5. Monitoring and review of this policy

We monitor our equality-related and environmental sustainability performance through our social accounting process. This examines

- The impact of our equality work and environmental sustainability
- Our performance against our equality and environmental sustainability action plans
- Analysis of monitoring data collected throughout the year
- Stakeholders' perceptions of our commitment to sustainable social justice
- Zebra workers' perceptions of our commitment to sustainable social justice

Our annual Equality Action Plan and Environmental Action Plan are created at an annual meeting, which all Collective members attend and at which actions are identified.

This policy is updated annually and published on Zebra's website. It may also be reviewed in response to our monitoring, feedback or changing legislation.

All Zebra members and associates are expected to read and implement this policy.

Reviewed July 2018

Appendix 1 Discrimination definitions under the Equality Act

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below).

Discrimination by association

This is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with (e.g. related to or friends with) another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Third party harassment

Harassment of employees by people (third parties) who are not employees, such as customers or clients.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so.