

# A Commitment to Women

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## I. ADMINISTRATION

The administrative department of ELCA Global Mission will:

1. Ensure the public articulation to ELCA Global Mission's various constituencies and companions in mission of the biblical, theological, and missiological foundations of, and rationale for, the division's commitment to women.
2. Practice a policy of equity for women with both Chicago based staff and deployed mission personnel that:
  - a. Has no tolerance of sexist behaviors or harassment;
  - b. Educates the board, staff, and mission personnel with respect to the ELCA's policies regarding sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, and ensures that all churchwide staff participate in related workshops offered by the churchwide organization;
  - c. Provides for the immediate and forthright investigation of allegations of behavior that violates the ELCA's policies on sexual discrimination and sexual harassment;
  - d. Provides mechanisms for women to address personal or communal concerns;
  - e. Seeks gender equity with respect to staff promotions, salary levels and increments;
  - f. Employs staff recruitment strategies that will increase the percentage of women on the program staff to a minimum of 50% (currently 36%). Emphasis will be given to the recruitment of women of color.
3. Require that gender-inclusive language (including God-language) is used in all ELCA Global Mission's public documents, resources, communications, and worship life, as well as in the division's communal life and global relationships.
4. Review all ELCA Global Mission public documents, newsletters, educational resources, and web-based communications with respect to the image of women presented and their compatibility with ELCA Global Mission's commitment to women.
5. Require that ELCA Global Mission sponsored worship, educational processes, and events provide occasions to (1) express the division's biblical and theological commitment to fullness of life for women, and (2) celebrate God's intentions for women's full participation in church and society.
6. Work with the Commission for Women to further the empowerment and leadership development of women on the ELCA Global Mission board and women employed as either Chicago based staff or mission personnel.
7. Periodically review all ELCA Global Mission departments with respect to their planning for and implementation of the division's commitment to women, and report to the board biennially.
8. Provide leadership to the executive and finance committee to ensure that the division's budget planning and decision-making processes support the division's commitment to women.
9. Require the review of the use of ELCA Global Mission grants to companion churches and agencies in the light of the division's commitment to women.
10. Require the review of the use of ELCA Global Mission grants to other organizations such as Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran World Federation, Church World Service and Witness, and by other ELCA units and synods to ensure that these monies are used in such a way as to support gender equity and the full participation of women.
11. Ensure that evaluative processes are used to measure the effectiveness of strategies, programs, and activities that support ELCA Global Mission's commitment to women.

## **II. FINANCE**

The finance department of ELCA Global Mission will:

1. Facilitate the design of budget processes, evaluation and reporting systems in support of the division's commitment to women.
2. Provide reports and other information, with respect to measurable factors such as dollars spent, to the division's departments as requested to assist them in tracking and monitoring the implementation of the division's commitment to women.

## **III. INTERNATIONAL PERSONNEL**

The international personnel department of ELCA Global Mission will:

1. Prioritize the recruitment and assignment of women candidates, including women candidates of color, for assigned positions, and for GM-2 and volunteer positions.
2. Give special attention to "person-driven" positions for women candidates available for assigned positions.
3. Pursue creative and meaningful ways of recognizing and maximizing the contributions of female spouses, particularly in long-term associate positions.
4. Promote the use of continuing education opportunities for women in both assigned and associate appointments.
5. Provide support structures and resources for assisting female mission personnel in dealing with gender equity, discrimination, sexual harassment, and personal security issues among mission colleagues, within the companion church or agency, and in the social and cultural context of the country of service.

## **IV. GLOBAL MISSION TO THE ELCA**

The global mission to the ELCA department will:

1. Develop and implement an integrated strategy seeking gender equity in GMELCA programs, activities, and resources that applies to the program objectives of Goal IV.
2. Provide adequate resources to ensure that each area of the GMELCA budget is enabled to support the division's commitment to women.
3. Provide an emphasis on women of color and young women in all GMELCA programs that highlight the contributions of women globally in church and society.
4. Provide an emphasis on "women of wisdom" that highlights the lives, experience, and contributions of elderly women globally in church and society.
5. Provide resources and learning opportunities to educate the ELCA constituency about the global realities of women and what it means for the ELCA to accompany women in the mission of the Triune God. These will include advocacy as well as educational resources.
6. Make available to the ELCA constituency in a variety of creative, innovative, and compelling media the biblical, theological/missiological foundations of the division's global commitment to gender equity and the full participation of women in church and society.

7. Advocate for gender equity in companion synod programs and provide guidelines that facilitate the focus on women in companion synod relationships, particularly in programs involving travel between companion churches.
8. Develop educational and advocacy resources and opportunities related to violence against women that key off and integrate with the Decade for Non-Violence.
9. Require that all new resource development, event planning and implementation, and activities of the stewardship program include women's voices and participation at all levels.
10. Edit all GMELCA resources, documents, and communications to ensure that gender inclusive and culturally sensitive language is used.

## **V. AREA PROGRAM DIRECTORS**

The area program directors will:

1. In consultation and cooperation with companion churches and agencies, and as an expression of accompaniment, seek to expand existing programs and projects and develop new programs and

projects that:

- a. Provide leadership development for women in church and society;
  - b. Support women in leadership positions in the church;
  - c. Address the crisis of abuse and violence against women as a human rights issue;
  - d. Provide educational opportunities for women that secure greater participation in social, economic, and political life;
  - e. Increase maternal and child health care programs - including both preventive and primary health care;
  - f. Address the impact of the AIDS pandemic and its disproportionate impact on women;
  - g. Address the root causes of poverty that lead to the exploitation of women and girls in areas such as sex trafficking, child labor, and forced labor;
  - h. Facilitate and support women's small income generating enterprises such as micro-credit and other forms of micro-economic development of women.
2. Continue advocacy for the ordination of women in companion churches that do not currently ordain women or allow ministerial training of women.
  3. Provide support, resources, and networking for both women in ministerial training and women clergy in churches that do currently ordain women.
  4. Facilitate global networking of women leaders in companion churches.
  5. Ensure that women's concerns are on the agenda at Church World Service and Witness Forums.
  6. Create processes and structures for evaluating ELCA Global Mission sponsored projects and programs in companion churches and agencies to measure their effectiveness in responding to the needs and issues of women.
  7. In consultation with companion churches ensure that an equitable percentage of in-country scholarship funds are committed to the education of women, and require reporting on the use of in-country scholarship funds from grant recipients.
  8. Prioritize projects to ensure that available resources are equitably committed to projects and programs that directly benefit women.

9. Apply the following check list in evaluating proposed projects and programs:

- a. Does it raise the level of women's income?
- b. Does it raise the awareness and understanding of women's rights as human rights?
- c. Does it address the root causes of poverty, violence, and discrimination against women?
- d. Does it include an advocacy component?
- e. Does it save lives? Is it life-giving?
- f. Does it strengthen women's self-understanding and self-esteem?
- g. Does it provide educational components that raise the ability of women to participate more fully in social, economic, and political life?
- h. Does it facilitate women in assuming leadership roles in church and society?
- i. Does it have measurable outcomes so its effectiveness in benefitting women can be evaluated?

10. Proactively identify and address, in consultation with International Personnel and, where appropriate, with companion churches and agencies, the concerns of women mission personnel.

## **VI. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The international development department will:

1. Accompany women living in poverty by providing grants to projects and programs that alleviate immediate suffering.
2. Accompany women by providing resources to companion church development departments that reduce women's workload, e.g., for digging wells and providing clean water.
3. Provide funds for projects that reduce women's workloads through LWF-DMD and/or LWR-WS projects, e.g., grinding mills.
4. Provide funds for leadership development of women at the grassroots level.
5. Provide funds for health care programs that benefit women by addressing preventive health care issues, e.g., HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, pre-natal and post-natal care, nutrition.
6. Provide funds for skills development for women that lead to greater social and economic self-reliance.
7. Provide funds for income-generating projects for women that lead to greater self-reliance and economic sustainability.
8. Provide support for advocacy programs that seek the elimination of violence against women and girls.
9. Work with area program directors/companion churches, LWF, and LWR to identify and draft funding proposals for projects and programs that implement ELCA Global Mission's commitment to women.

## **VII. INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

The international scholarship department will:

1. Continue to implement the department's strategy of awarding at least half of its scholarships to women candidates. This will include offering a more proactive leadership development planning process to companion churches to assist them in considering the role of female leadership in their overall leadership needs.

2. Analyze scholarships awarded to women candidates over each of the last three years on country by country, regional, and global levels, and report to the executive and finance committee. This analysis should consider such factors as:

- a. Number of women awarded scholarships
- b. Degree level of awards
- c. Major course of study
- d. Leadership role targeted by companion church prior to the start of study
- e. Leadership role assumed following completion of study
- f. Number of single women awarded scholarships
- g. Number of women awarded scholarships with an accompanying spouse
- h. Number of women awarded scholarships with accompanying children (how many children?)

3. Work with APD's in identifying and advocating for potential female IS candidates who, though not presently ready for international study, could be made ready with in-country scholarship support.

4. Develop, in consultation with the APD's, a follow-up process with women scholarship recipients who have completed their study and returned to their home churches to determine the impact of their study with respect to such concerns as present leadership role, salary level, support systems, local, regional and global networking, etc. This information will be shared with APD's and the LWF Women's Department so that they may support and advocate for these women in conversations with companion churches.

***Affirmed by the board of ELCA Global Mission, October 2001.***