

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that every human being is entitled to from when they are born until when they die. At Travelife, we expect our Members to follow the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UNDHR). It includes 30 essential rights that every human is entitled to. You can [click here](#) to read them in full and we have provided a summary of the most relevant areas for Travelife Members below. The United Nations has also established special rights for children and indigenous peoples that Travelife Members are expected to respect. You can find more guidance for this in the Member Zone.

WHO DO THEY APPLY TO?

They apply to every human being but there are certain people that Travelife Members are expected to pay special attention to:

- Your staff – permanent, temporary, part time, casual, full time and contracted
- Your local community
- Your guests
- Your suppliers and sub-contractors including the staff they employ

You need to pay special attention to people in your community that are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. These are likely to include:

- Children
- People living in poverty and the homeless
- The elderly
- Women
- Minority groups (ethnic, religious etc.)
- People with disabilities or illnesses
- People who are unfamiliar with your area and/or don't speak the local language

WHAT AREAS OF YOUR BUSINESS DO THEY COVER?

Respecting human rights and having fair labour conditions are an essential part of being a more sustainable business and you should treat this subject as seriously as your environmental work. In terms of your Travelife Certification, you need to ensure you are respecting and protecting human rights in all of the following areas of your business:

- Staff recruitment – either directly or through agencies
- Employment terms and conditions – especially wages, working hours, overtime and time off
- General working conditions
- Staff career progression including training opportunities
- Supplier and sub-contractors
- Community engagement and support
- Your guests and staff – how they are treated and how they treat others
- Staff training about human rights and safeguarding children
- Guest communications
- Your internal reports
- Your public policies and reports
- Environmental management
- Using aspects of local indigenous culture at your business such as art, entertainment, food etc.
- Retail

THE HUMAN RIGHTS RELEVANT TO TRAVELIFE CERTIFICATION

We expect every Travelife Member to respect all 30 of the rights set out in the UN Declaration, however some of them are specifically covered in the Travelife Standard so you will need to provide evidence that you comply with them in order to be Travelife Certified. These are summarised below along with how they relate to your business, which business area they cover and the related criterion on the Travelife Standard.

EQUALITY

Summary of universal rights

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

How this applies to Travelife Certified Members

You cannot discriminate by offering different types of staff accommodation, break areas, food and beverage, access to essential services or levels of privacy and security.

Example: You cannot put staff of one ethnicity in worse accommodation than people of another ethnicity.

You must pay people the same wages for the same work. Any differences in pay should relate to the level of responsibility and experience that is relevant to their job.

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

The terms and conditions of employment must be the same for everyone. This includes hours, breaks, holidays, benefits, opportunities, training, disciplinary and grievance procedures. The only exception is if you legally employ children, who you will need to make special conditions for so as not to hinder their education, health and general wellbeing.

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

You cannot discriminate when you are recruiting staff.

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

You must treat members of your community that are customers of your hotel the same as you treat your guests.

Example: If your restaurant takes guests from other hotels in your destination, you cannot deny or restrict access from members of your community.

All of your guests must have the same access to your services and facilities.

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

FREEDOM

Summary of universal rights:

- Everybody is free to travel within a country, to leave their country and return as they wish.
- Everybody is free to enter or leave employment without penalty or retaliation.
- Everybody is free to seek help from the law.
- Every worker is free to join a union or any other group in order to peacefully ensure their rights are respected and to seek better conditions.
- Nobody can be detained against their will.
- No human shall be a slave and no human can enslave another.

How this applies to Travelife Certified Members

You must not collect any recruitment fees from an employee, or allow an employment agency to collect fees, in order for staff to either secure or maintain their employment.

Example: You should not use recruitment agencies that collect fees from employees, instead you should pay all of your recruitment costs.

You must not retain or withhold any documents belonging to an employee that would prevent them from travelling freely within or outside your country.

Example: You must never withhold original passports, visas or other travel documents.

You must not retain or withhold any documents belonging to an employee that would prevent them from leaving their employment and you must ensure that any employment agencies you work with do not do the same. These include passports, other identity documents or financial documents (including credit/debit cards), unpaid wages and personal possessions.

Example: You cannot make it difficult for employees to leave your company by withholding items that belong to them or wages for hours that they have already worked.

You should never physically detain employees by preventing them from leaving areas, such as staff accommodation or work areas, by locking them in or by any other means.

Example: Whilst it is acceptable to restrict access to certain areas (storerooms, guest areas when off duty etc.), staff should be able to easily leave their accommodation and the premises.

You must allow all of your staff to join a union or a similar association, to form their own group that can discuss their employment terms and conditions, and approach management with complaints, ideas and suggestions without fear of retaliation.

Example: Your terms of employment cannot restrict trade union membership or forbid employees to form an association.

You must not prevent any staff from reporting issues or seeking help from law enforcement or other legal authorities, or retaliate against them for reporting crimes against themselves or others.

Example: If an employee is assaulted by a guest, they have the right to report the issue to local police.

LIVING STANDARDS

Summary of universal rights

- Everyone is entitled to a fair wage that enables them to provide food, shelter, healthcare and education for themselves and their family, and to pursue opportunities in their life as they wish.
- Everyone is entitled to rest and relaxation from work, including paid holidays.
- Workers are entitled to safe, clean and uncrowded working and living conditions.

How this applies to Travelife Certified Members

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

Example: All people who work on your premises, regardless of how they are employed and who they are employed by, should be paid at least the legal minimum wage.

You must ensure the hours, breaks, days off and paid time off comply with national or international standards at a minimum.

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

You must ensure you provide your staff with any additional benefits and conditions as required by local and international regulations such as pension schemes, sick leave, maternity leave and so on.

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

In many countries the legal minimums still do not provide for a good quality of life so Travelife Members should consider offering at least one benefit above the legal minimum that will improve staff quality of life.

Example: In countries without free medical care, you could offer discounted medical insurance or vouchers to visit a local clinic. In countries that already offer strong employee benefits through the local laws, you could offer childcare vouchers or higher pension contributions.

Travelife Tip



During your audit you may be required to show evidence that you are complying with local or international labour laws. It is up to your auditor to decide how they will find that evidence but you can prepare by ensuring you can easily find all of the following documentation:

- ✓ Records of hours worked and wages paid
- ✓ Terms and conditions of employment signed by employees
- ✓ Evidence that you provide your employees with all of their legal entitlements
- ✓ Evidence that you are not discriminating when you recruit staff
- ✓ Evidence that all staff are treated equally
- ✓ A document containing all the labour and human rights laws you must comply with

ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Summary of universal rights

- Everybody has the right to access public services in their country such as education, healthcare, water and sanitation.
- Everyone has the right to an education and this must be free and compulsory during the elementary stages.

How this applies to Travelife Certified Members

You must ensure your operations, including any building work or renovations, do not prevent your staff or your community from accessing basic services such as healthcare, education, water and sanitation.

Example: Your water use reduces water availability elsewhere in your community or you undertake building work that disrupts access to a local medical clinic.

You must ensure that your operations do not prevent children from accessing education.

Example: Promoting excursions visiting local schools that could disrupt classes, or working hours that prevent parents from taking their children to and from school.

SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS

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

How this applies to Travelife Certified Members

Any essential services that you provide for your guests should also be available for local people if these services do not exist in your local community.

Example: If you are in a remote location and provide a medical clinic for your staff, you must offer a similar service to locals.

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

Example: You could provide human rights training to all new staff and include your human rights statement in your supplier communications.

You should take steps to prevent exploitation and discrimination at your hotel and in your community.

Example: Training staff on how to identify and report instances of exploitation and discrimination.

You should use your influence as a business to try to educate people like suppliers, guests and community leaders about the importance of respecting human rights.

Example: Publish your human rights policy and the work you have undertaken in this area in your public reports or add clauses to your supplier contracts that warrant that they will respect human rights.

RESPECTING PEOPLE'S PERSONAL LIVES, LIVELIHOODS, BELIEFS AND CULTURES

Summary of universal rights

- Everyone has the right to privacy where they live, within their family and with their correspondence.
- Nobody should be subject to attacks or accusations that may harm their reputation, everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty, and has the right to defend themselves against accusations at an impartial hearing.
- Everybody has the right to own possessions and property, and to only share them if they wish to do so.
- Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural, artistic and scientific aspects of their community.
- Everyone is entitled to hold intellectual property rights for their scientific, written or artistic creations. Nobody can copy or take someone's original creations without their permission.

How this applies to Travelife Certified Members

All staff must be able to use toilet, bathing and changing facilities that are private, safe and secure. Staff accommodation must have doors that staff can lock and in shared accommodation, there must be a secure place for each staff member to store their personal possessions. Staff must be allowed to enjoy their accommodation without interference and any inspections must be carried out with proper notice to ensure their privacy is not disturbed.

Example: You must provide a secure place for staff to store personal items when they are on duty.

You should have procedures in place that prevent any type of abuse or harassment at your place of work and provide training on human rights to your staff.

Example: You must have personal grievance procedures in place and any employees that harass or abuse other people must face appropriate disciplinary procedures.

The operations of your business should not prevent your staff or your community from participating in their cultural traditions, and should protect these traditions and way of life.

Example: Educate your guests about how to interact with local cultures in a respectful way.

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

Example: Ensure you do not sell local artefacts of cultural or historical importance, or seeking the input from indigenous representatives on incorporating indigenous art, food or music into your business.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

What are your unique needs?

For some properties, respecting and supporting human rights will be very simple to implement and for others it will be more complex. What you do depends on the size of your property and the destination you are in.

For example, a large business has a greater influence, so they have more responsibility than small businesses. Also, if you are in a remote location where the majority of local people are indigenous, you will have very different considerations than a hotel by a major international airport. You will need to do more research about how to protect indigenous peoples whereas an airport hotel might be primarily focussed on the labour aspects of human rights.

Another important consideration is what your local and national laws include. For example, the European Union has many laws that protect human rights and fair labour conditions. It is still important for properties in the EU to ensure they fully comply with the Travelife Standard, however, some aspects may be easier to follow because the local guidelines are clear and well enforced.

Members in countries that lack strong laws will need to do more work on this by researching international guidelines and may also find that their laws in their own country contradict the Travelife Standard. For example, Travelife states that you must not discriminate based on gender or sexual orientation and some countries have this discrimination written into their laws. For guidance on how to deal with unique issues like this, please contact the Travelife team in London.

What issues concern your community and your staff the most?

The best policy and plan will address things that are of unique concern to your community and your staff. For example, if medical care is extremely expensive in your destination, then that would be something your property might have the power to help with, either through subsidising care for your own staff or by supporting initiatives that address the problem.

If your staff are concerned by homelessness or education, then focus on supporting those areas first. The more involved your staff feel in deciding where to direct your efforts, the more likely they, your guests and your community will be to support you.

Keep records

A Travelife auditor will ask to see evidence that you are complying with all of the human rights and labour-related areas of the Travelife Standard. Be sure that you have the relevant documentation and records available to show them.

MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Travelife Quick Guides: Labour and Human Rights Policy, Safeguarding Children, Disciplinary Procedures, Grievance Procedures, Avoiding Workplace Discrimination, Community Engagement

Travelife Detailed Guides: Fair Labour Practices, Safeguarding Children, Community Engagement

[Click here](#) to view the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[Click here](#) to view the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People

[Click here](#) to view the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child

[Click here](#) for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) website that details issues such as minimum wages and working hours.