

*Creating a safe learning  
environment for all*

*The Hague Academy for Local Governance*



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local governance

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## 1. Introduction

Dear participants,

Since 2006, The Hague Academy for Local Governance has been working together with governments, international organisations and civil society organisations worldwide, to support good local governance. Inclusion is at the heart of all our training courses, along with other values, such as integrity, accountability and gender equality.

We believe that the way we conduct our trainings is as important as the content. To ensure our messages are credible, we need to practice what we preach. Moreover, learning only takes place in an environment where all participants feel respected, free to express their opinions and comfortable to practice and experiment with new approaches and ways of thinking.

The Hague Academy staff and trainers are therefore guided by a Code of Conduct that translates our core values into a concrete set of principles that guide the way in which we develop and conduct our training courses, manage our external relations, as well as our internal governance.

Our staff and trainers, can only create a safe learning environment with the help of you, our participants. We have therefor designed this Behavioural Code, which addresses our responsibilities to each other during the training. We encourage you to read this Code and use it to guide your actions. Strive to create a learning environment where everyone feels safe and respected. Speak up if you have a concern or see something wrong, and seek guidance anytime you are unsure about the right thing to do.

Our Code is a great resource, but it doesn't cover every situation you may face, so it's important to use good judgment in everything you do and to ask for help if you're ever unsure about the right course of action.

Agreements on enforcement of this code and the complaints procedures apply to all staff and participants involved in our trainings.

Together we will ensure that this course at The Hague Academy will be a wonderful learning experience!

**The team of The Hague Academy for Local Governance**

## 2. Guiding Principles

The Hague Academy has the ambition to realise a safe social climate for all participants by expecting appropriate attitudes and behaviour from all persons involved. We believe in a training environment where staff and participants treat each other and the outside world with respect, dignity and integrity. Our ambition is based on the following guiding principles:

### 1.1. We value diversity and treat each other with respect

At The Hague Academy, we believe in the power of diversity and equal chances. This diversity can only thrive when we respect each other. Moreover, all our participants are entitled to a learning environment that is free of harassment, bullying and discrimination. That is why all staff and participants shall refrain from any form of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, relation to any community, property, economic and social condition, sexual orientation, birth, disability or other personal status. Staff and participants shall also be sensitive and respectful to the moral values, religion, customs, traditions, and culture (including dress code) of all individual members of the group and the Dutch society at large.

We have a zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment and any form of (sexual) abuse or violence or other undesirable behaviour such as inappropriate comments in public or on social media. The excessive use of alcohol, drug abuse, etc., is never tolerated either.

*A detailed brief on Undesirable behaviour is attached as Annex 1: Regulations on Undesirable Behaviour. **Please ensure that you read and understand the brief.***

### 1.2. We comply with legislation

The Hague Academy seeks to strengthen the rule of law worldwide and we want our organization to set a good example. Therefore, staff and participants shall not engage in any activities that are unlawful under the civil and criminal laws of the Netherlands or any of the countries they are residing in for the purpose of the training.

### 1.3. We respect each other's privacy

To stimulate the exchange of experiences during our trainings, we want to ensure that any personal information shared is handled with confidentiality. The training courses of THA are interactive and private and confidential information is often shared which, if made public, could harm the person sharing the information. We therefore follow the Chatham House Rule, which states that information disclosed during a meeting may be reported by those present, but the source of that information may not be explicitly or implicitly identified. Private contact information of participants is only shared with third parties upon consent of the persons involved.

#### **1.4. We operate with integrity**

Integrity is one of the core values of The Hague Academy. Therefore, we expect our staff and our participants to operate with integrity at all times. Integrity relates to honesty, openness and dependability in personal and business relationships and in administration and management.

#### **1.5. We protect our/your organisations' reputation**

The Hague Academy treasures the good reputation it has built. Staff, trainers and participants to our training courses should behave in a way that is respectful to others and does not damage this reputation or the reputation of the organisation they work for. This also applies to activities outside the official training hours and on social media.

#### **1.6. We ensure you can speak up without fear**

We know it takes courage to come forward and share your concerns. We won't retaliate or permit retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith report about possible misconduct. Regardless of who you contact, you can be confident that you're doing the right thing and that your concern will be handled promptly and appropriately. We investigate reports of misconduct thoroughly, disclosing information only to those who need it to resolve the issue.

### 3. Violation of the Behaviour Protocol

By signing up for any of our courses, you have given your consent to comply with this protocol. In the event of any form of misconduct or undesirable behaviour, the following steps will be followed:

#### 2.1. Undertake action yourself:

- To stop the undesirable behaviour it is important that this behaviour is identified as such and discussed with the person that has shown the undesirable behaviour.
- Each participant has the right **to tell a fellow participant** in case this person appears to be breaching the THA Behaviour Protocol. Together you can try to come to an acceptable solution of the problem at hand.
- If this is not possible due to the nature of the behaviour, or if there are obstacles to talk about this with the persons involved in the undesirable behaviour, you can involve The Hague Academy.

#### 2.2. Notification of incident:

- Any participant who feels offended or (sexually) intimidated for any reason, and has not been able to address this issue with the person involved, is strongly encouraged to express this to the Programme Manager in charge of the course.
- In the unfortunate case that a member of the course management is implicated in the complaint, the participants should contact Emmely Benschop, Team Manager and member of the Management Team, or Anouk de Boer, HR adviser at THA. The participant will receive full cooperation from THA in discussing the incident.

#### 2.3. Consultation

- The Programme Manager / Team Manager and the complainant normally decide on the course of action together.
- In most cases, the first communication will be aimed at the person that has shown the undesirable behaviour.
- Together with all parties involved, we will try to come to an acceptable solution that everybody can agree upon, and that allows all parties to complete the training.

#### 2.4. Follow up

- In the case of sexual harassment and any form of (sexual) abuse or violence, THA has the right to suspend someone from the training course, proceed with immediate repatriation (in case of participants on a scholarship) and informing the authorities, including your employer and your funding organisation/donor.
- In the event of unlawful behaviour, THA will report it to the relevant law enforcement institutes.

# Annex 1: Regulations on Undesirable Behaviour

## 1. Introduction

In order to promote well-being during the training period, The Hague Academy for Local Governance wishes to prevent and deter undesirable behaviour.

Everyone at The Hague Academy has a shared responsibility to maintain a pleasant social atmosphere by behaving in a proper manner by respecting the rights of others at all times. Even if a participant does not experience any form of undesirable behaviour him-/herself, he/she can act responsibly by pointing out any such behaviour he/she witnesses.

Any participant experiencing a breach of these regulations should notify The Hague Academy so that appropriate action can be undertaken.

## 2. Definitions of Undesirable Behaviour

Undesirable behaviour is behaviour where somebody harms your personal integrity. Examples of this are: intimidation/bullying, (sexual) harassment, aggression and violence or discrimination. But it also includes abuse of power or unfair treatment. It can be expressed in many forms: verbal and non-verbal, physical, digital, by phone or for example via chatting, text messages or WhatsApp.

### 2.1 Sexual harassment:

Any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour **with a sexual connotation** aimed at a person and resulting in the violation of that person's dignity, creating a threatening, hostile, insulting, humiliating or hurtful environment.

### 2.2 Intimidation/bullying:

Any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour aimed at a person and resulting in the violation of that person's dignity, creating a threatening, hostile, insulting, humiliating or hurtful environment.

### 2.3 Aggression and violence:

Verbally, psychologically or physically harassing, threatening or attacking others.

### 2.4 Discrimination:

Making any remarks in whatever form about, performing acts in respect of, making decisions about or discriminating against a person on the grounds of religion, beliefs, political affinity, race, gender, nationality, heterosexual or homosexual orientation, marital status, age or disability, aimed at or resulting in the violation of a person's dignity or the violation of a person's rights and/or resulting in a person being adversely affected by this in any other manner whatsoever.

### 3. Examples of undesirable behaviour

In order to understand the definitions, we have included some examples of behaviour that violates our THA Behaviour Protocol.

#### 3.1 Undesirable behaviour of a sexual nature:

- Verbal or non-verbal sexual approach e.g. blatant requests for sexual favours.
- Sending unsolicited pornographic images or texts or the deliberate viewing of such images in a manner that is visible to others.
- Discussing one's personal sex life in front of other participants or asking intimate/private questions of other participants.
- Making unwanted sexual comments or jokes.
- Uninvited visits to hotel rooms during the training course.
- Humiliating and/or criticizing comments regarding a person's sexuality.
- Exhibitionism.
- Leering behaviour (looking at a person (or parts of a person) constantly without particular reason).
- Unwanted repeated hugs or other forms of touching.
- Giving unwanted gifts of a romantic nature.

#### 3.2 Abusive/violent behaviour

- Belittling or making fun of a person's spiritual or religious tradition, beliefs or practices.
- Expressing negative expectations directed at a person during discussions.
- Threatening violence against a person.
- Argumentative yelling due to difference of opinion.
- Name-calling, Insulting, swearing.
- Unreasonably ordering around of fellow participants.