

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
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REPLICABLE METHODOLOGY FOR THE CREATION OF ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES FOR  
INDEPENDENT AEROSPACE STUDENT GROUPS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE CASE OF  
TECSPACE

**Abstract**

Around the world, independent groups and organizations of undergraduate students related to aerospace endeavors are on the surge, especially in emerging countries. These groups face particular challenges, one of them is the lack of existing policies and bylaws that preside over their members and endeavors. This occurs because they are usually focused mainly on specific goals such as engineering, education and outreach. As such, other important aspects of managing an organization tend to be left behind. This is a problem because it generates a susceptible environment for conducts of discriminatory harassment of different types such as sexual, gender and sexual orientation-based harassment. However, the importance of these kinds of policies and bylaws is often overlooked by independent organizations. The biggest reason being that nowadays, almost every organization, university and company has a harassment policy. Most of the current undergraduate students have never been part of an organization that lacks these relevant policies and therefore cannot foresee the problems that come with their inexistence.

This paper will document the case of TECSpace, an independent aerospace engineering student group from the Costa Rica Institute of Technology (ITCR) where it was found that about 10% of the organization's members had experienced gender discrimination. To address this problem a methodology was developed by TECSpace members, psychologists and lawyers from the Gender Equality Office of the ITCR. This methodology was thought to be replicable with the objective that other independent organizations that do not have resources, such as gender equality offices or expert's support, can create their own harassment policies. This methodology is open and democratic, meaning that it involves most, if not all, members of the organization through focus groups. It consists of several steps which include existing policy revision, definition of the organizing team, characterization of the organization's community, focus groups consultancy, data systematization, policy definition, results divulgation and incorporation of the policy to the organization. These steps will be explained in detail with guides and templates to facilitate

their application. This methodology is the first developed specifically for independent aerospace student groups. In Latin America, TECSpace is the only group of this nature that has a harassment policy and bylaws. The implementation of these policies allows for better and more efficient organizational culture, working environments and promotes diversity in the aerospace sector, which translates to better results for the organization's main objectives whether they are engineering, education or outreach.