

CERF 2023 Code of Conduct and Ombuds Transparency Report

CERF has made it a priority to have the Biennial CERF Conference, and all CERF events, be safe and welcoming for all participants. Since CERF 2019, CERF has implemented and enforced an Event Code of Conduct at its biennial conference, and we continue to revise and improve the code and its implementation. New in 2023, CERF provided a conference ombuds to serve as a neutral, independent, off-the-record resource available on-site to hear concerns confidentially. The ombuds was available to assist with identifying options and resources to address conflicts or issues such as harassment, microaggressions, discrimination, or any violation of CERF’s Event Code of Conduct.

As part of our efforts to make CERF conferences safe and welcome, CERF is committed to releasing a transparency report summarizing incidents and consequences after each conference. The Code of Conduct has a strong emphasis on confidentiality; this report has been written in such a way to avoid linking reporters with specific incidents. The goal of this transparency report is to provide the community with a sense of how the Code of Conduct functions so they can build trust in the process and recommend improvements.

At CERF 2023, we did not receive any complaints of violations of the code of conduct through our formal reporting mechanisms. As part of the post-conference survey, CERF asked if participants were aware of the Event Code of Conduct,

and whether they witnessed or were subject to violations of the Code. Of 191 respondents, 69% said they were aware of the code of conduct to a moderate or large extent, 48% said they were aware of ways to report code of conduct violations to a moderate or large extent; and 44% said they were aware of the ombuds to a moderate or large extent. This indicates a need to find ways to better inform attendees of these important safety measures. Of 190 respondents, two said that they had witnessed or were subject to a violation: one related to age discrimination on one to violations of the social media policy. This information helps CERF to better understand the extent of violations, as well as how we may better implement the Code.

Ombuds Nnena Odim is a mediator, ombuds, attorney, trainer, and consultant. At CERF 2023, she provided a safe and confidential space for conference participants to share their thoughts and give feedback about the conference; by her visibility and presence, she provided the opportunity for people to reconsider their conduct and behavior; she gave participants the opportunity

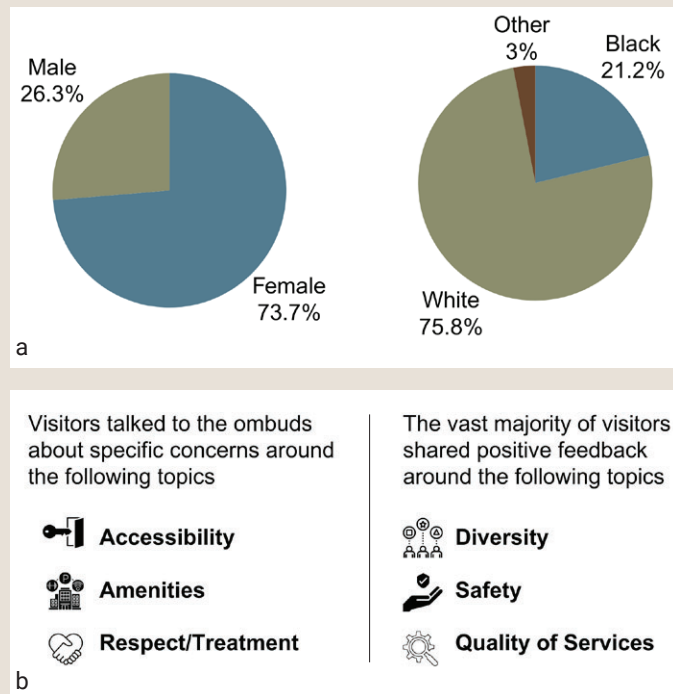


Fig. 1. (a) demographics of people who visited the CERF 2023 conference ombuds and (b) a summary of the ombud's discussions.

to express and process their concerns so that they could continue to participate in the conference from a better place and to bring their best selves to the rest of the conference; and she provided referrals and conference resources to visitors seeking conference-related assistance. Thirty people talked to Nnena during the conference. Figure 1 summarizes the demographics of visitors and the information learned. You can see a full CERF 2023 conference ombuds report at <https://conference.cerf.science/2023-ombuds-report>.

If you have suggestions for how we can make the next meeting more welcoming and supportive, contact Susan Park at spark@cerf.science.