

**Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
(PSEA)**

Code of Conduct

on

Prevention of abuse and safeguarding



Action for Community Empowerment

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Applicability

The Code of conduct applies to:

- All Action for Community Empowerment Employees, on permanent or temporary employment,
- Members of the Executive Committee,
- contractors,
- Partners and for the people with whom we work
- Any family members accompanying staff on their work
- consultants
- interns
- voluntary workers
- Service providers and partner organizations collaborating with Action for Community Empowerment.
- *The Code of conduct both applies during and outside working hours.*

Your work for or with Action for Community Empowerment

As a development organization we, promote Action for community Empowerment, respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of communities which are more vulnerable, like women, children, marginalized and disadvantaged. Action for Community Empowerment is committed to ensuring the protection not just of its beneficiaries, but also of all those in contact with its actions. In the course of your mission, you will find yourself in positions of trust and power with regard to these populations, your own staff and Action for Community Empowerment's collaborators. In such situations, members of Action for Community Empowerment are expected to behave in an appropriate, responsible and respectful manner.

Each member of Action for Community Empowerment represents the organization and is responsible for safeguarding its image. Any lack of respect for its values damages Action for Community Empowerment's reputation and can undermine the legitimacy of its actions.

This Code of conduct outlines the behaviours and practices expected of you with regard to the protection of beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as the actions to be avoided in order to guarantee that the relations created within our teams, with our beneficiaries and with all those in contact with our organization, are respectful of Action for Community Empowerment's ethics and, more generally, of the values it defends.

Ethics Code

1. I will ensure that all beneficiaries including children, women, employees, partners, community-based actors and any other people with whom I come into contact are treated with respect, dignity and equality as I am aware that Action for Community Empowerment has a zero-tolerance policy for Women and child safeguarding violations and sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by employees, personnel and sub-contractors of Action for Community Empowerment and its partners, contractors
2. Knowing that Child protection, safeguarding and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) remain core to the Action for Community Empowerment's mandate, I will to the best of my efforts with honesty and integrity upheld these values
3. I will always make sure that beneficiaries including, women, children, staff and partners are treated with respect, dignity and equality regardless of their age, sex, physical condition, impairment, language, religion, opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, status, class, caste, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristics.
4. I will always show respect to all categories of employees, partner's staff, community volunteers or beneficiaries/ communities
5. I will never exploit a beneficiary including a women and child and will never verbally, physically or psychologically abuse or commit any other form of abuse against a beneficiary/ community.
6. I will never subject a beneficiary/ partner/staff to any kind of humiliating, degrading or abusive behaviour, whether physical, verbal or psychological or of other nature.
7. I will never use language or make suggestions to provoke, harass or degrade the person or knowingly show disrespect for traditional/cultural practices.
8. I will not tolerate or engage in any form of physical or psychological harassment, discrimination, abuse of power or intimidation at work, including by making derogatory comments or adopting a demeaning attitude
9. I will never engage in or tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation or favouritism in the workplace, including sexual and psychological harassment and abuse of power, respecting the rules that apply to me (especially Internal Rules) on these issues.
10. I will always behave in a professional way with colleagues, communities, partners and donors avoiding spreading rumours and false allegations and refraining from any comment based on gender, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristics – which may be considered as harassment.

11. I will never have sexual relations with a person under the age of 18, regardless of the age of consent, local customs or the law in effect.
12. I will never engage in any form of sexual relations with anyone under 18 years old, regardless of the age set by the sexual majority, the law or local customs. Mistaking a child's age is not a defence.
13. I will never watch, publish, produce, or share pornography showing children or women, and / or show such material to children and women
14. I will never have sexual relations in exchange for money, a gift of any kind, work or any form of assistance.
15. I will never engage in any form of sexual relations or favours in exchange for money, gifts, job or humanitarian aid.
16. I will never directly or indirectly use women and an adult or a child to provide sexual services to third parties, support, facilitate or participate to any form of prostitution or sexual exploitation. I will never sexually exploit a beneficiary or engage a child in labour (including domestic work) against access to aid, or any kind of benefit.
17. I will immediately report to my management or a person of confidence in the workplace any suspicions, information, rumours or doubts concerning possible abuse - without having investigated it personally
18. I will always raise any concern and query concerning the Code of conduct, the PSEA and the Child Protection Policy with my manager / supervisor, or if not possible, with another from my hierarchy or with a designated focal person (according to internal reporting rules).
19. I will immediately report any suspicions or allegations of behaviour going against the principles of the Code of conduct, the PSEA and the Child Protection Policy to my manager/ supervisor – even if the information or allegation is vague and without having investigated it personally.
20. I will ensure that all beneficiaries are treated with respect in all forms of verbal and written communication.
21. I will always use respectful words and the people's names when speaking to them and to other persons or communicating on them.
22. I will always ensure that all audio, written or visual communication respects the dignity and human rights of the person featured (including anonymity when necessary and for all women and children) and does not expose her or him to any risk of retaliation or abuse of any nature.
23. I will never show the faces of beneficiaries, women or children who are exploited sexually, victim of trafficking or abuse, or who can easily be located even if their identity has been modified.

24. I am aware that failure to disclose or knowingly withhold information about any reports, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of this Code of Conduct constitutes grounds for disciplinary measures.
25. I will uphold the highest standards of accountability, efficiency, competence, integrity and transparency in the provision of goods and services in the execution of my job.
26. I will cooperate when requested with any investigation into alleged breaches related to this Code
27. I will promote a culture of honesty and openness among Action for Community staff and management.
28. I will be transparent in all work-related and financial transactions.
29. I will not steal, misuse or misappropriate funds or property, ensuring that financial and other resources are used solely for the intended purposes.
30. I will not engage in forgery, money laundering, taking of commissions and influencing tender process for improper benefit and theft.
31. I will contribute in creating a work environment where communities and staff can safely and confidentially raise and report all serious concerns about suspected fraud and corruption.
32. I will not support knowingly any individuals or entities involved in illegal activities.
33. I will not destroy deliberately, falsify, alter or conceal evidence material to an investigation or make false statements to investigators in order to materially influence or impede investigations into corrupt, fraudulent, coercive or collusive allegations.
34. I will conduct all business in accordance with accepted practices and procedures and uphold the highest standards of accountability and transparency in relations to finances, management and governance, where relevant.
35. I will not use or accept a bribe in the form of money, goods and or services to secure a contract for services when dealing with suppliers in any development or humanitarian work
36. I will not take part in activities that generate personal, organizational or collective profit such as buying or selling when such activities may affect or appear to affect Action for Community's credibility or integrity
37. I will declare any known or potential conflicts of interest to their employer (e.g. direct relationship with service providers or suppliers of goods for action for Community Empowerment's programmes, etc.)
38. I will not accept any gifts or other favours that may influence the performance of staff functions or duties. Gifts are defined as, but not limited to: services, travel, entertainment, material goods, among others.
39. I will not use illegal labour, child labour and forced labour in any work area

- 40. I will pay compulsory State taxes and comply with national law and international standards.
- 41. I will strive for the highest health, safety and environmental standards in all programme work
- 42. I will ensure, where possible, that goods purchased are produced and delivered under conditions that do not involve the abuse or exploitation of any persons and have the least negative impact on the environment.
- 43. I will never use or distribute known unsafe products or supplies in any development or humanitarian setting.
- 44. I will not use or possess weapons or ammunition of any kind while on duty
- 45. I will not drive a vehicle while on duty under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance and comply with the laws of the land.
- 46. I will not report to duty in work under the influence of alcohol.

Understanding the Code

The signatory, below has read, understood and is in agreement with the content of this document. The Action for Community Empowerment Code of Conduct, which shall be subject to periodic revision and review. The signatory accepts the consequences of any violation of any of the above provisions under this Code of Conduct. This agreement comes into effect from the signing.

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

Place:

Definitions

The purpose of the definitions mentioned below are to make sure everyone understands exactly what Action for Community Empowerment means by the terms listed.

Abuse:

Any act of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation involving potential or actual harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of others and committed by a person in a position of responsibility, trust or power.

Abuse of power:

The improper use of a position of power, influence or authority by an individual against others. This abuse can take the form of intimidation, threats, blackmail or humiliation (this list is not exhaustive).

Sexual abuse:

Any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature involving force or in unequal or coercive conditions. The use of actual force is not necessary for such acts to be considered sexual abuse.

Sexual exploitation:

Any actual abuse or attempted abuse committed for sexual purposes by an individual in a position of responsibility, power or trust. This also includes obtaining financial, political or social gains of the sexual exploitation of another individual. Participating in the organization of abuse is also considered to be sexual exploitation.

Harassment:

Any inappropriate conduct which has the purpose or effect of offending or humiliating others. This conduct may be of a verbal, non-verbal or physical nature and intended to hurt, degrade, intimidate, humiliate or embarrass, or to create a climate of hostility, intimidation or discomfiture. Harassment usually supposes a series of incidents.

Bullying

is aggression expressed psychologically and emotionally rather than physically. The term is used to describe a repeated pattern of negative intrusive violational behaviour against one or more targets and comprises constant trivial faultfinding criticism, refusal to value and acknowledge, undermining, discrediting and a host of other behaviours.

Complainant:

The person making the complaint, including the alleged survivor of the sexual exploitation and abuse or another person who becomes aware of the wrongdoing.

Discrimination:

Discrimination means exclusion of, treatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability.

Corruption:

is the “offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may improperly influence the action of any person”

Fraud

Is an intentional distortion, deceit, trickery, and perversion of truth or breach of confidence, relating to an organization's financial, material, or human resources, assets, services and/or transactions, generally for the purpose of personal gain or benefit. Fraud is a criminal deception or the use of false representations to gain an unjust advantage.

Minor:

A person under age 18 (a child according to the definition in the Convention for the Rights of the Child, CRC).

Gender based violence (GBV):

Any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will; that has a negative impact on the physical or psychological health, development, and identity of the person; and that is the result of gendered power inequities that exploit distinctions between males and females, among males and among females. Although not exclusive to women and girls, GBV principally affects them across all cultures. Violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or socio-cultural. Gender based violence may manifest in numerous ways: domestic violence, battering, rape and marital rape, female genital mutilation, torture, trafficking, and forced prostitution, dowry-related

Subject of the complaint (SOC):

The person alleged to have perpetrated the misconduct in the complaint

Survivor or victim:

The person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused. This term implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive.

Protection:

Ensuring that individual basic human rights, welfare and physical security are recognized, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards.

Workplace violence:

Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. These behaviors would originate from customers, co-workers at any level of the organization. This definition would include all forms of harassment, bullying, intimidation, physical threats/assaults, robbery and other intrusive behaviors.



SECRETARY
ACTION FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Mahesh Agrawal
Secretary