

Preamble

This code of conduct (Code) contains a set of ethical standards and values that Läkarmissionen promotes in the cooperation with NGOs and other agencies in the field of development and/or humanitarian aid. The intention of the Code is to promote good governance, transparency and accountability. It is also an effort to protect and promote the right of the employees and volunteers in the service of others.

The signatories to the Code will be the voice and give priority to the needs and interests of the people in poverty and vulnerability that they serve. In the mission to assist people improve their living conditions, the work shall be based on the active participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project by all relevant stakeholders. The projects shall encourage independence and self-reliance for both the organization and the beneficiaries. The projects shall foster human rights, gender equity and consider the cultural and historical context.

This Code also means to inspire the signatories to develop internal guidelines and policies in areas covered by the Code, if such policies are not in place already.

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Governance

Good governance is the foundation when building trust and respect within an organization, among the partners and the public - particularly among those who the organization aims to serve. The proper functioning of an organization and a transparent and democratic decision making process will increase efficiency and inspire confidence and legitimacy to all stakeholders. The Code states that:

- Governance and management should be designed in accordance with national legislation (i.e. proper registration and structure according to organizational model).
- The organization must have democratic, clear and well reasoned decision-making procedures, mandate and role-descriptions, whereby promoting a culture of openness, transparency and accountability. Employees must be given power to influence in order to promote continuous learning and organizational development. The beneficiaries should be able to share relevant information, make their voices heard and get feedback.
- Employees should be able to freely and openly communicate with the management regarding working conditions without fear of reprisal, intimidation or threat. Accurate information on expectations of staff, policies and achievements should be communicated clearly.

Management

A well functioning management will make every endeavor to mobilize all capacity and resources of the organization to achieve the mission and objectives of that institution. In that task, management will need to recognize and make efficient use of the interlocking functions of leading, directing, organizing, planning and controlling. The Code states that:

- The organization must ensure good management, clear division of labor and professional planning of project design and activities.
- The organization shall have satisfactory procedures for monitoring and quality assurance of the projects.
- Evaluation of the organizational capacity and projects should be made regularly, and when possible, together with the beneficiaries.
- The organization must avoid nepotism and bias in recruitment and selection of employees and the beneficiaries.

Financial Management

High quality standards for financial management should be characterized by honesty, transparency and accountability. This - along with the application of generally accepted accounting principles that will assure some kind of common rules to measure against - will inspire confidence to external partners, such as donors, the authorities and the public. Staff in charge of financial management and accounting should adhere to the principles of competence, integrity, confidentiality and objectivity in performance of duties. The Code states that:

- The organization must have good financial management and control, and ensure that the accounting system, procedures for filing and working practices for project management are satisfactory.
- The organization must have good procedures for internal control.
- Received funds will be used according to agreement, for the intended purpose and be duly reported.
- The organization should make efficient use of funds received. Administrative expenses including salaries of employees should be moderate. For safety reasons, use of cash is to be minimized. Salary payments should, if possible, be made by check or transfer to the payroll accounts.
- Procurement procedures in the project shall harmonize with those of Läkarmissionen.
- The organization shall conduct an annual external audit of the organization. The audit shall be conducted by a certified public accountant, be in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and in accordance with Läkarmissionen's instructions. For further guidance on good principles for auditing we refer you to the international auditing standards as described by International Standards on Auditing (ISA).

Corruption

Corruption is a violation of moral, ethical and democratic principles. All levels within an organization have the obligation and responsibility to demonstrate good practices and fight corruption. Corruption is understood to mean the abuse of position of trust for personal gain. This could for instance be embezzlement of the organization's funds, to give or accept bribes or make threats or blackmail in exchange for services or other favors. It could also be to favor family members, friends or other relatives. The Code states that:

- The organization shall have no tolerance against all forms of corruption and must always investigate allegations of corruption. The organization shall ensure that the allegations or complaints, made by any employee within the organization or somebody from the outside, shall be handled expeditiously, with integrity, impartiality and confidentiality.
- The organization shall adopt policies to protect whistleblowers.
- In case the claims of alleged corruption, or the proof of corruption, are great, the organization should bring the case to the corresponding law enforcement agency.

Labor and Human Resources

A crucial element for a successful implementation of an organization's vision and mission is a motivated and competent team of staff and volunteers. The employer shall foster and assure good labor conditions, free from abusive and disrespectful treatment. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the employer to fulfill the national labor law and strive to meet international labor standards. By providing support and good management to the employees, and by encouraging staff contribution in the planning processes, organizations can benefit from increased effectiveness and qualitative service. The Code states that:

- The human rights of the employee and the beneficiaries shall be respected. They shall be treated with respect and dignity.
- The work place will be free of harsh and inhumane treatment, including sexual harassments and sexual abuse, corporal punishment and mental or physical coercion or verbal abuse. Nor will there be any such threats.
- Employment shall be voluntary and the employees shall be free to quit with a reasonable notice. The participation by the beneficiaries in the activities is voluntary.
- Employees should have relevant training and experience for the job. Employees should receive appropriate training to perform their duties in a professional manner.
- Employees shall not work more hours and days per week than what is stipulated according to national law. Employees shall have at least one day off every week.
- Minimum wages shall be observed and follow national law. Salaries and other benefits shall not deviate markedly from similar organizations, they shall follow national law and be set with consideration and respect for the origin and nature of the funds donated to the organization. Employees shall be compensated for overtime. Salary deduction as a disciplinary measure shall not be applied.
- The organization will follow national law concerning employment, taxes and social security contributions, and ensure that employees have job descriptions.
- Employees have the right to attend union meetings and/or be union members, have the freedom of association and collective bargaining without the employer in any way discriminate against this.
- No child labor is accepted in any part of the organization´s work. A child is a person under the age of 15 or the age when it is not completed compulsory education or according to the minimum age for employment according to national law. Participation in apprenticeship programs is supported, provided this is allowed under national law. Workers under the age of 18 will not be permitted to perform work which is likely to put at risk their health and safety.

Health and Safety/Security

In the development and/or humanitarian aid work the demands on the staff and the working conditions are often stressful and physically, mentally and emotionally challenging. The employer should ensure that the working environment is as secure as possible and that the needs of the staff is cared for in order to mitigate the risks of illness and injury. The Code states that:

- Employees shall not be exposed to risks related to the working environment. The employer shall ensure safe procedures for hazardous processes, where such phenomena occur (such as laboratory work and construction).

- The employer must ensure that facilities, laboratories, toilets, kitchens and dormitories etc are of good sanitary standards.
- The employer shall ensure that there are adequate procedures for dealing with epidemics and ensure that work does not aggravate people's risk of attracting HIV/Aids.
- The employer must ensure that there are good procedures and secure routines for employees who work after dark and who stay in exposed environments (e.g. accommodation, avoid making field visits alone, safe transport, security arrangements and communication availability).
- The employer must ensure that the work does not expose (or exacerbate exposure) staff or the beneficiaries to violence and conflict.
- The employer shall urge employees to observe precaution when visiting high-risk areas (e.g. war zones or areas vulnerable to crime).

Environment

As individuals and as organizations we all have an impact on the environment, directly or indirectly, through our consumption, production, use of electricity, transportation and waste management etc. By creating awareness of our ecological and environmental footprints we have the possibility to change our attitudes and behavior to do what we can to reduce a negative impact. The Code states that:

- The organization will consider and minimize negative environmental impact in the design of projects.
- The organization shall protect the environment surrounding the organization and create routines for the safe and environmentally friendly disposal of waste and hazardous waste materials (i.e. chemicals, batteries, glass, cans etc).
- The organization will work to promote good management of materials and energy.
- The employer will inform and encourage good environmental initiatives in the home and workplace.
- The organization will provide proper understanding of sustainable society and development and the principle of recycling.

Gender and Non-discrimination

To promote gender and non-discrimination is to safeguard the fairness in treatment, uphold respect for the individual and the human dignity. It is to meet the human need, not based on sex, age, religion or ethnicity, but on the basis of recognizing all humans' equal value. The treatment and approach might differ, but should always strive to provide equivalent benefits and opportunities, as well as obligations. The Code states that:

- The organization should in particular encourage and enable women's participation in the work and in the activities. Therefore there is a need to ensure that the safety of women's participation is considered.
- The organization should encourage and enable women's active participation in decision-making and leadership.
- The work shall promote the full participation of marginalized individual and groups regardless of gender, religion, age or ethnicity.

Humanitarian Relief

In the event of natural or man-made humanitarian disasters an agency in the field of development aid may have the ambition, the moral obligation and possibility to act. The principal aim of humanitarian relief is to prevent human casualties and ensure access to the basics for survival. To be prepared for such an event it is good to have made planning and preparations, both around operational capacity but also on behavioral principles when bringing humanitarian relief. The Code states that:

- On the operational side the organization may consider issues like:
 - a) What type of assistance can my organization provide?
 - b) Can we develop a rapid response system?
 - c) What local resources or networks are there to collaborate with?
 - d) What can we as an organization do for other agents when a disaster occurs?
 - e) How do we get information, coordinate and communicate with other relevant agencies?
 - f) What kind of training does the staff need?
 - g) Do we have the capacity to provide information and pictures to donors for their fundraising?
- A helpful guide on the behavioral principles is the International Red Cross Code of Conduct that states:
 - a) The Humanitarian imperative comes first
 - b) Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone
 - c) Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint
 - d) We shall endeavor not to act as instruments of government foreign policy
 - e) We shall respect culture and custom
 - f) We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities
 - g) Ways shall be found to involve program beneficiaries in the management of relief aid
 - h) Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs
 - i) We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources
 - j) In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects