

Code of Conduct



Adopted by the Board on 25 June 2013

1. Purpose and definition

A **code of conduct** is a set of principles, values, standards or rules of behavior outlining the responsibilities of or proper practices for an individual or organisation. It shall guide the decisions, procedures and systems of the organisation in a way that respects the rights of all constituents affected by its operations.

2. Scope and applicability

In respect of all matters detailed herein, this Code of Conduct shall apply to the entire organisation of We Effect, in Sweden and abroad. The Board, all employees, interns, trainees, volunteers, or similar, when representing We Effect in any given context will be required to adhere to this Code of Conduct.

Throughout the document, the term *staff* is used as a common denominator for all categories above.

Unless explicitly stated, this Code of Conduct does not replace other existing or future guidelines or regulations and shall therefore be considered a complement to these.

This Code of Conduct applies whenever on duty and at all times when conducting a business trip. In addition to this, expatriates shall adhere to this Code of Conduct at all times in the country where she or he is stationed. Staff that for any reason enjoys immunity against some local or national laws shall independently of this adhere to this Code of Conduct.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, there is also a separate Code of Conduct that applies to We Effect presence in humanitarian settings (Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Assistance in oPt, February 2013). We Effect has also adopted and abides by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Code of Conduct.

3. Guiding values and general preconditions

We Effect is founded on the principles of participation, non-discrimination, equal opportunity and democratic organisational structures. We Effect strictly maintains a neutral profile in party politics and religious matters.

Representing We Effect implies assuming the role as a representative of the entire community of organisations working in international development cooperation. In addition, expatriates are more likely to be seen as a representative of We Effect and the international community also outside of direct work-related activities. Consequently, when outside of Sweden, it is important to remember that it will be difficult to “step out” of the role as We Effect representative. This said; We Effect expects all staff to adhere to this Code of Conduct, independent of geographical location and/or nationality.

We Effect encourages all staff to speak out when witnessing or suspecting violations to this Code of Conduct, since not doing so is likely to be considered as a sign of acceptance or approval.

Therefore, as We Effect staff you shall:

- Respect and comply with decisions taken within the organisation.
- Always consider possible consequences of your actions, since these may affect not only yourself, but also the reputation and accountability of We Effect as an international development cooperation organisation.
- Whether on duty or leave, not engage in any form of activity that can be directly harmful to the organisation and its staff, or that may harm the reputation of the organisation.
- Not be involved in formal partisan political processes or promotion of own religious views, which may affect the work and objectives of We Effect.
- Consider Swedish law applicable, whether representing We Effect in Sweden or abroad.
- Comply with local and national laws and regulations as long as these do not conflict with international conventions¹.
- Always disclose information you may have regarding suspected cases of violation to the Code of Conduct to your immediate superior, who will take due action. However, given that the nature of this information might be sensitive, it shall always be handled with care, both by the person giving the information and the person receiving the information.
- When witnessing or suspecting violations to this Code of Conduct among persons from our partner organisations, staff from other international organisations, or any other person external to We Effect, always take a stand against this. Speaking out against actions committed by external persons may have negative implications for you or We Effect as an organisation. If you feel that this might be the case, you shall raise the issue with your immediate superior to discuss an appropriate course of action.
- Understand that violation to this Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and may, in accordance with relevant legislation, lead to internal disciplinary actions, dismissal or even criminal prosecution.
- Understand that We Effect staff has responsibility to handle and respond to any allegations of misconduct. Violations to the Code of Conduct should be reported immediately to the immediate superior. Intentional false accusations will render disciplinary action.

4. Abuse of power

As an international organisation working with and among persons and organisations that to a lesser or greater degree depend on our support, the risk of unequal relations of power is always present. Whether an unequal relation of power exists or not is a subjective judgement. A person may be under the impression that your relation with her or him is unequal, even though this might not be the case from your or another person's point of view. Unequal relations are not a problem exclusive to relations between We Effect staff and external persons but can also occur within the organisation, for example between an employee and her or his colleague or superior.

Therefore, as We Effect staff you shall:

- Never take advantage of your position in order to gain benefit, be it for yourself or another person.

¹ As stated under section 1. Scope and applicability; staff that for any reason enjoys immunity against some local or national laws, shall independently of this adhere to this Code of Conduct.

- Ensure that your behaviour cannot be understood as if you expect favours or benefits of any kind.

We Effect believes that there is a risk of power abuse or conflict of interests if a staff member engages in a personal relationship with either a colleague, a staff member in a We Effect partner organisation or any person in the immediate professional network, and firmly advises against it.

5. Sexual exploitation and abuse

All forms of sexual exploitation and abuse are prohibited, as are all forms of sexual contact with child. By child is meant, in accordance with the definition in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, any person under the age of 18.

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Understand that sexual exploitation and abuse by staff involved in development and humanitarian work constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore ground for immediate termination of contract.
- Never engage in any sexual activity with child/children regardless of the locally set age of majority or age of consent. Sexual activity with children is prohibited. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a way to defend oneself.
- Not accept, solicit or engage in the buying of or profiting from sexual services. This is applicable to staff both within and outside of working hours.
- Never exploit the vulnerability of any person or group of persons in the context of development and humanitarian work or allow any person/s to be put into compromising situations.
- Know that the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited.
- Never abuse your position to withhold development or humanitarian assistance, or give preferential treatment in order to solicit sexual favours, gifts, payments of any kind, or advantage.
- Given the increased vulnerability of populations in crisis situations, abstain from engaging in sexual relationships with members of crisis-affected populations since such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- When working with children, avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice and never act in ways that may place a child at risk of abuse.

6. Harassment and discrimination

We Effect condemns all forms of harassment and discrimination and will not tolerate their presence in the organisation's operations, either internally or in external relations. Harassment and discrimination refer to those based on ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious belief or age, and sexual harassment. By harassment, we mean any act that violates a person's dignity and is related to gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or disability. Discrimination is different to harassment in the sense that it is not necessarily related to a person's gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or disability. Violent, harassing

or discriminatory behaviour of any kind directed toward another person within or outside of the organisation is unacceptable and shall not be tolerated.

Therefore, as We Effect staff you shall:

- Treat everyone with respect and in a dignified manner in the workplace².
- Never commit any act or form of harassment as it causes physical, sexual, psychological or emotional harm or suffering to individuals.
- Never engage in any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, that makes the recipient feel persecuted, vulnerable and powerless.
- Understand what constitutes harassment, recognise early signs of harassment and take swift action.

7. Fraud and corruption

We Effect defines corruption as *the abuse of entrusted power for illegitimate individual or group benefit*. Fraud is defined as misusing an organisation's resources for private gain. Corruption and fraud are closely related; therefore We Effect does not make any specific distinction between the two. Regulations and procedures are further described in the We Effect Anti-corruption Policy.

8. Unethical business practices

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Always follow transparent, accountable and honest practices when receiving cash donations from the public for development purposes.
- Never use or accept a bribe in the form of money, goods and/or services to secure contracts or services.
- Make sure to follow established regulations when purchasing goods and/or services. Regulations and procedures are further described in the We Effect Procurement Regulations.
- Never take part in commercial activities for personal gain or such that may affect or appear to affect We Effect's credibility or integrity.
- Never share in the profits or budget leftovers as bribes, cuts or discounts for personal or organisational benefits.
- Declare any known or potential conflicts of interest to your employer (e.g. direct relationship with service providers or suppliers of goods).
- Never 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. In respect of national and local traditions and conventional hospitality, minor token gifts such as pens, calendars, desk diaries, etc., are excepted from this rule.
- Never make use of illegal labour, child labour and forced labour in any work area nor condone the existence of it within We Effect supported activities.

² Workplace in this context refers to any space or occasion where staff is, or can be, considered to act as a representative of We Effect.

- Always pay compulsory state taxes and comply with national business law and international standards.
- Always strive for the highest health, safety and environmental standards in all work.
- Ensure, where possible, that goods purchased are produced and delivered under conditions that have the least negative impact on the environment and that they do not involve the abuse or exploitation of any persons.
- Never use or distribute known unsafe products or supplies in any development or humanitarian setting.

9. Competing activities

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Not carry out work nor directly or indirectly conduct competing activities for another company or organisation.
- Not undertake assignments or activities that can affect your work negatively. If you intend to undertake an assignment or a spare time job of a more extensive nature, you shall consult with your immediate superior before doing so.
- In case you receive any kind of remuneration for doing something in the name of We Effect, for example giving a lecture, the remuneration shall go to We Effect.

10. Privacy policy and disclosure of information

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Never use confidential information you may obtain during the course and scope of your employment, for any purposes other than for which it is disclosed.
- Sensitive information about colleagues or superiors must be handled with utter discretion. Slander is not tolerated and will render disciplinary action.
- For guidelines on speaking out against violations to this Code of Conduct, see section 3 Guiding values and general preconditions.

11. Organised crime

Organised crime can take on many forms, everything from trading in cheap capital goods on the black market to the indirect support of trade in people. Fencing (buying and selling stolen goods) is regulated under Swedish law.

Therefore, as We Effect staff you shall:

- Be aware of organised crime and its forms, for example when exchanging money, choosing housing and accommodation or choosing which restaurant to visit as well as in any other everyday situation.
- Avoid all forms of contact with organised crime.
- Be aware and always take into consideration that trade in people, so-called trafficking, does not only occur with the intention of sexual exploitation, but also occurs with regard to such things as domestic help and gardening help and other areas.

12. Pornography

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Keep the workplace clear of all pornographic material.
- Never use technical equipment, computers, etc. that the organisation³ provides for work to access pornographic material or disseminate it.
- All dealings with child pornography are totally prohibited, including outside the workplace.
- Know that child pornography, both possession and dissemination, is regulated under Swedish law.

13. Alcohol

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Adopt a restrictive approach to alcohol and the consumption of alcohol.
- Limit the consumption of alcohol during work to exceptional cases such as official dinners and similar events.
- Drinking and driving is prohibited when on duty and if using a We Effect vehicle when off duty.

14. Narcotic substances

As We Effect staff you shall:

- Always avoid all forms of involvement or contact with substances classified as narcotics, except if this is authorized within the framework of the assignment, or refers to prescribed medication for personal use.
- Know that the unauthorized consumption of narcotic substances will render disciplinary action.

15. Security

The security and safety of all staff and those with whom we work is a top priority for We Effect and the organisation will strive to do all that can reasonably be done to ensure that staff is secure while on duty. Security is an individual as well as an organisational responsibility.

Therefore as We Effect staff you shall:

- Never carry any kind of weapons while on duty.
- While on duty, never drive a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance, and comply with the laws of the country in relation to both.
- Abstain from giving a lift to hitch hikers or other persons that are not associated with the work of We Effect or We Effect partner organisations, for personal security as well as for insurance and liability reasons.

³ This also includes equipment that is provided to you by a third party, when the purpose of the provision is to carry out a work assignment related to We Effect; for example carry out a study using equipment from a person or organisation other than We Effect.