

Mission 21

Regulations applicable to the Code of Conduct

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Scope and purpose.....	2
3. Individual rules of conduct.....	3
4. Institutional rules.....	4
5. Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation.....	4
6. Child protection and safeguarding	5
7. Other rules of personal conduct	6
8. Statement of personal commitment.....	7

1. Introduction

1.1 Mission 21's mission statement¹ affirms: *"We advocate a life of dignity. All women and men have the same rights. We strive to overcome discrimination on grounds of gender, language, ethnicity, age, origin and also religion. In these endeavours, human rights guide us in the direction we should follow."* The mission statement continues: *"Quality standards for international cooperation, the efficient and impact-oriented use of resources, and the principle that projects and programmes should not inflict damage or cause new conflicts: we regard these aspects as binding obligations."*

1.2 As a faith-based organisation, Mission 21 upholds the following principles: all human beings are created in God's image; they acquire their dignity from this source of life – regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, ethnicity and/or disability, among other attributes; and all human beings must therefore be respected and protected. This understanding, rooted in the Gospel, must be expressed coherently in the structuring of the organisation and in all interactions among individuals as they engage in their work. Personal behaviours and practices are part of God's call to build a community of trust and respect. These values of trust and respect are embedded in the organisation's work environment, structure and programmes.

1.3 Personal attitudes can sometimes impair this relationship of trust and respect. Although such issues may arise, they do not undermine the organisation's values, nor do they debase its understanding of its own identity as a community based on love, trust and respect. As part of the organisation's self-concept, this acknowledgement of human frailty is the first step towards addressing and coming to terms with it in an appropriate, dutiful and transparent manner. To achieve this, Mission 21 diligently defines binding procedures and policies together with complaint mechanisms that are widely known and easily accessible.

1.4 Mission 21 is committed to the good governance practices of transparency, participation and accountability. Any form of misconduct is strictly prohibited. By adopting this approach to its work, Mission 21 is able to fulfil its mission and contribute to a life in dignity.

2. Scope and purpose

2.1 These Regulations applicable to the Code of Conduct (below: the «Regulations») serve two main purposes: to promote accountability and to outline the key responsibilities of staff. The standards defined in this document apply to all staff; for the purposes of these Regulations, the term «staff» denotes any individuals working for or representing Mission 21 (including temporary and permanent staff, board members, consultants and any individuals who sign a contract that includes all the required policies and regulations). These Regulations also apply to volunteers who have signed them.

¹ Mission Statement for Mission 21 (<https://www.mission-21.org>)
Regulations applicable to the Code of Conduct, 12 June 2020

2.2 Project contracts concluded between Mission 21 and its partner organisations include a clause regarding these Regulations. Partner organisations undertake to introduce a Code of Conduct that is binding on their staff and representatives.

2.3 These Regulations follow the guidance of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE). As a member of ACT Alliance, Mission 21 is obligated to adhere to ACT Alliance's «Code of Conduct for the prevention of misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, including sexual; and to ensure child safeguarding»². Likewise, as an organisation engaged in the exchange of personnel in development cooperation, Mission 21 adheres to the «Quality Standards for Personnel Development Cooperation» of the Swiss Association for the Exchange of Personnel in Development Cooperation (unité)³.

2.4 As an association governed by Swiss law with projects and partner organisations in some 20 countries, we comply with the legislation of the countries where we operate and also with the legislation of Switzerland. In case of inconsistency between a partner organisation's specific Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct of Mission 21 together with these Regulations, the latter shall prevail.

2.5 Mission 21 ensures compliance with the applicable data protection laws in Switzerland and the countries where we operate, and also with confidentiality requirements for personal and/or sensitive data pertaining to beneficiaries, members of communities where we operate, partners, donors and/or any other stakeholders, insofar as legal obligations regarding transparency and/or freedom of information are not already stipulated in relevant national or international legislation or in any contractual obligation.

Given that new issues may arise at any time, the following list is not exhaustive but includes the principal aspects that are of most relevance at present:

3. Individual rules of conduct

3.1 All staff of Mission 21 place their knowledge and skills fully at the service of Mission 21, insofar as required for their work on behalf of Mission 21. Members of staff undertake to carry out their mandates in a manner that is appropriate, reliable, credible, effective, purposeful and cost-efficient, and to manage the material and financial resources entrusted to them with due diligence and in accordance with their obligations.

3.2 If any member of staff has reason to believe that corruption, fraud, sexual abuse or sexual harassment has occurred in connection with Mission 21's activities, they are obliged to report their suspicion immediately.

² <https://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-code-of-conduct/>

³ Quality Standards for Personnel Development Cooperation: <https://www.unite-ch.org/en/standards-and-quality>

4. Institutional rules

4.1 When recruiting and employing staff, measures are taken to minimise the risk of misconduct involving sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, corruption, and other forms of abuse.

4.2 Mission 21 guarantees that an accurate, complete and well-documented system covering all its activities is in place to address allegations of fraud, corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse. Measures are also in place to ensure that the proper use of funds can be verified, and a clear procedure is established for reporting breaches of the Code of Conduct. For this purpose, mandatory provisions are in force regarding record keeping to ensure that all activities and transactions are accurately documented. Mission 21's Internal Control System (ICS) and the corresponding process-related surveillance mechanisms are reviewed at regular intervals.

5. Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation

Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation often result from power imbalances linked to social and gender-related inequalities. Mission 21 is aware that certain groups of people are especially vulnerable, including women, children and people with disabilities, and that sexual orientation may also result in vulnerability. To protect all stakeholders in every situation, all staff adhere to compulsory standards of behaviour which require them to:

5.1 Understand what constitutes harassment; recognise its early signs (sexual, gender-based and racial harassment); and take swift action to prevent such behaviour and resolve the problem.

5.2 Never commit any act of harassment, because such acts inflict physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional harm or suffering on individuals.

5.3 Empower any individuals affected by intimidation or harassment to develop strategies that will reduce and eliminate such behaviours; also, take necessary disciplinary action against those found to have committed an act of harassment.

5.4 Never exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours, and never engage in other forms of humiliating or exploitative behaviour; never take advantage of sexual services in return for assistance that is due by right to the person or persons concerned.

5.5 Never abuse a position by withholding development or humanitarian assistance, or by giving preferential treatment in order to solicit sexual favours, gifts, payments or advantages.

5.6 Never engage in sexual relationships with members of crisis-affected populations, given that such individuals are highly vulnerable and that such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, so they undermine the credibility and integrity of aid work.

5.7 Never exploit the vulnerability of any target group in the context of development, humanitarian and advocacy work, including women, children and people with disabilities in particular; never do so on the basis of sexual orientation; and never allow any individual or individuals to be placed in any compromising situation.

5.8 Never engage in any sexual activity with a child or children under 18 years of age, regardless of the local age of consent. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.

5.9 Never consume, purchase, sell, possess or distribute any forms of child pornography.

6. Child protection and safeguarding

Mission 21 affirms that all children have the right to be safe at all times, and that they have equal rights to protection against all forms of neglect, violence and abuse. All forms of exploitation are an affront to children's dignity as human beings. The following rules apply to all staff:

6.1 Never act in ways that may place a child at risk of abuse: this includes failure to give due consideration to the assessment and reduction of potential risks to children resulting from activities that are undertaken. Behaviours and actions that are prohibited include, but are not limited to: using inappropriate language or behaviour when dealing with a child or children; bullying and harassing a child verbally or physically; physical punishment; and exposing a child to pornography, including online grooming and trafficking. Avoid being alone with a child whenever possible.

6.2 Respect children's right to participate, and ensure that priority is always given to the child's best interests; programmes must be designed to ensure that children are safeguarded.

6.3 Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers; encourage and promote children's participation in decisions that affect them.

6.4 When photographing or filming a child/children for work purposes, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions regarding the reproduction of personal images. Ensure that photographs or films present children in a dignified and respectful manner.

6.5 Obtain written permission or verbal informed consent from a child's parent or guardian when taking a picture of a child in a group or individual portrait, or when a child is the subject of extensive reporting and his or her face or name can be visually identified in the photograph or film footage. This obligation also includes giving a general explanation of how the photograph or film will be used, and obtaining agreement on the scope of any accompanying information that could allow identification of the child. The same applies when photographing and/or filming groups of children⁴.

6.6 When sending images electronically, ensure that file images do not reveal any information that could identify a child.

6.7 We respect children's rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

7. Other rules of personal conduct

All members of staff must:

7.1 Not use or carry any weapons or ammunition, defined as anything that causes injury, damage or destruction.

7.2 Use IT technology for appropriate professional purposes, in accordance with Mission 21's Policy regarding the Use of Information Technologies, Data and Confidentiality⁵.

7.3 Adhere to Mission 21's procedures and systems to protect and safeguard any personal information collected from communities that could put such communities at risk.

7.4 Never consume, purchase, sell, possess or distribute narcotic drugs.

7.5 Not visit bars, restaurants or other premises where children are sexually exposed.

7.6 Not drink alcohol or use any other substances in a way that affects their ability to perform their function or could damage Mission 21's reputation.

⁴ NOTE: Where informed consent cannot be reasonably obtained, staff must limit the identifying details of the photographed subject. Where photos/films that include children are taken spontaneously or unexpectedly, or where informed consent cannot reasonably be obtained (e.g. photographs/film footage of people escaping emergencies or people taken from a distance), children must not be identifiable from the information accompanying the photo/film footage.

⁵ Policy regarding the Use of Information Technologies, Data and Confidentiality, Mission 21, October 2017.

8. Statement of personal commitment


- a) Applicability: I always apply Mission 21's Code of Conduct to everything I think and do.
- b) Zero tolerance: I am constantly aware that a "zero tolerance" policy is in force for any breaches of Mission 21's Code of Conduct.
- c) Good governance: I implement the practices of transparency, participation and accountability in all situations and at all times.
- d) Rule of law: I always follow established procedures and guidance on behaviour when situations are unclear.
- e) Training: I acknowledge that good governance requires awareness and appropriate training.

These Regulations are drawn up in German and English. In case of a conflict between these two versions, the German version shall prevail. These Regulations are supplemented by the «Guidelines on the Regulations applicable to the Code of Conduct».

These Regulations applicable to the Code of Conduct were approved by the Executive Board on 12 June 2020.

Basel, 12 June 2020


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