



# ADER-COV

ACTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE  
ECOLOGIES AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Preamble

This Code of Conduct sets out our principles of conduct and aims to preserve the long tradition of integrity and credibility that ADER-COV has built since its founding, in pursuit of its mission to combat poverty and exclusion, restore the environment, protect animals, and educate children.

It therefore defines the principles to which we adhere, in accordance with our values based on cooperation, integrity, respect, fairness, and commitment, as well as the ethical rules we agree to abide by as staff members, both at headquarters and in the programming communities, as members of management, members of the board of directors, and as members of a committee.

### PRINCIPLES

Individually and collectively, we are committed to:

- Comply with the law, the organization's internal policies, and our commitments
- Respect and protect the communities with which we work
- Create a work environment based on trust and mutual respect
- Perform our duties with honesty, integrity, and rigor
- Avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest

- Demonstrate loyalty to the organization and partners

## **SCOPE**

Based on both common sense and good faith, the principles and rules set out below are intended to help all those involved guide their actions, taking into account their specific role.

For staff members, this code applies regardless of their hierarchical level or status. It is an integral part of the organization.

## **SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This code applies to all members of the organization in the exercise of their functions as well as to all persons who carry out a mandate with the organization and makes it possible to regulate behavior in the use of human, financial and technical resources made available to them.

## **Section I - ACTING WITH INTEGRITY**

We refrain from entering into any agreement or taking any action contrary to laws, frameworks and rules of sound administration and good conduct, as well as from transacting or entering into agreements with third parties that are of an illicit or unethical nature.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- Demonstrate transparency in relationships and transactions with the organization's partners, donors, and collaborators, while protecting confidential information.
- Ensure extreme discretion with all confidential information, particularly personal information, and take the necessary steps to ensure it is kept in a secure location.
- Protect confidential data, developed approaches, programmatic strategies, or any other type of content that belongs to the organization.
- Maintain the bond of trust between partners and the organization by not disclosing information about them without their express authorization, unless required by law.
- Refrain from participating in any unauthorized payment, negotiation, or expenditure.
- Refrain from taking advantage of access to confidential and privileged information for the purpose of obtaining or negotiating a personal advantage.
- Respect the assets and resources allocated to ADER-COV and do not use them for personal purposes.

## **Section II - ACT WITH RIGOR**

We perform our duties conscientiously, provide accurate information and properly maintain all records and registers.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- To adequately fulfill its mission and produce quality results, ARAF relies on everyone to perform their duties rigorously and diligently.
- Performing one's duties rigorously means, in particular, keeping records in order by recording accurate information and without showing complacency toward anyone.

### **Section III - RESPECTING THE LAW**

We comply with the laws and regulations in force in our respective countries, as well as the organization's internal policies and frameworks.

The organization has adopted a Policy for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption and Fraud, and applies a zero-tolerance policy in this regard.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- In the performance of their duties or in the execution of their mandate, members of the organization shall not violate any civil, criminal, or penal law, and shall act in accordance with the contracts entered into by ADER-COV.
- Illegality such as fraud, theft of property or time, acceptance of bribes or kickbacks, or any other form of corruption are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at any time. The diversion of food or materials intended for beneficiary populations constitutes theft.
- When using the Internet and social media, whether personally or on behalf of the organization (with its permission), members of the organization must not violate any law and must not make any comments of an abusive, defamatory, racist or sexist nature or transmit hateful, pornographic or harassing material or material for which ADER-COV does not hold the copyright.

### **Section IV - RESPECTING PEOPLE**

We treat each other with courtesy and diligence, good faith and fairness, and respect for the rights and freedoms of each individual. This means that discrimination and harassment will never be tolerated within the organization, nor will attacks on the health, safety, and dignity of colleagues. Respect for others is essential at all times.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

Respecting the person means in particular:

- Treat others fairly, taking into account their differences.
- Respect fundamental human rights without distinction, exclusion, or preference based on race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, age (except as provided by law), religion, political beliefs, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, disability, or the use of means to alleviate such disability.
- Respect the culture and customs of local programming communities.
- Maintain a work environment that fosters collaboration and mutual respect, free from harassment, physical or verbal violence, intimidation, or discrimination.
- Protect the health, safety, and dignity of all members of the organization.

- Report any situation of non-compliance you witness.

## **Section V - PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

To fulfill its mission, the organization is called upon to work with communities in contexts where the population is vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. This is particularly true for women and children.

The organization has adopted a Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, and Abuse and applies a zero-tolerance policy in this regard.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- Create and maintain an environment that prevents abusive behavior, including sexual exploitation and abuse, abuse of power, and corruption.
- Never engage in any form of harassment, exploitation, or abuse.
- Never exploit a person's vulnerability, especially when it comes to women or children, or allow a person to be placed in a compromising situation.
- Never engage in any form of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.
- Never request favors of a sexual nature or impose any other form of humiliating, degrading, or servile behavior in exchange for money, employment, goods, or services, or in exchange for assistance owed to any person.
- Never engage in sexual activities with beneficiaries. They are prohibited because they are abusive given the inherent imbalance of power. Such relationships undermine credibility and taint the integrity of humanitarian work. Never engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of local laws on the legal age of consent or the age of majority in the community. Lack of knowledge of the child's true age can never be used as a defense.
- Ensure that any reports of violations of these rules by colleagues, whether received from beneficiaries or other colleagues, are treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- Ensure that any reports of violations of these rules are forwarded to those in authority. Those receiving such reports will initiate an investigation process according to established protocol.

## **Section VI - PROTECTING CHILDREN:**

There is a duty of care towards children who come into contact with our organisation in the context of the projects and programmes we implement within the communities we work with.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- Be aware of situations that may pose risks to children. Plan and organize work and the workplace to minimize these risks.
- Remain within sight, whenever possible, when in contact with children.
- Refrain from developing relationships with children that could, in any way, be perceived as exploitative or abusive.
- Never act with a child in a way that could be considered abusive or that could put the child at risk of abuse.

- Never use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Never engage in inappropriate physical or sexually provocative behavior toward a child.
- Never engage in or tolerate behavior with a child or children that is illegal or that exposes the child to danger.
- Never behave with a child in a way that could cause them to feel ashamed, humiliated, or degraded.
- Never initiate sexual activity with children (anyone under the age of 18).
- Never push, hit, or spank a child.
- Never bring children home, especially if you are alone with them.

## **Section VII - AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

We avoid placing ourselves in a situation of conflict of interest, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest. We make every effort to resolve any potential conflicts and disclose potential conflicts before they arise.

Each member of the organization must complete the Conflict of Interest Declaration and agrees to disclose it immediately if a situation that could lead to a conflict of interest subsequently arises.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- Each member of the organization discloses any conflict of interest situation that could favor their own interests, or those of their loved ones, to the detriment of those of the organization or the beneficiaries of our services, as well as any conflict of interest situation brought to their attention.
- Each member of the organization also discloses any situation that could suggest a conflict of interest, since the appearance of a conflict of interest can be as damaging as an actual conflict.
- Managers ensure that all transactions under their responsibility respect the organization's commitment to transparency.
- Any property, favor, service, advantage, or gift must be considered a potential source of conflict of interest. To be accepted (or offered), a gift must be modest and in accordance with custom so as to be perceived as a mark of appreciation, hospitality or politeness, and so that no interpretation of undue influence can be associated with it.

## **Section VIII - ACTING WITH LOYALTY**

ADER-COV recognizes that members of the organization may actively participate in their personal capacity in their community activities and on social media.

Members avoid taking positions that could embarrass the organization, or that could imply that the organization endorses their opinion or authorizes the information they convey.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- No member of the organization who uses the internet or social media may comment on, post, or transmit personal and confidential information about the organization without its permission.
- Each member agrees to comply with the organization's policies regarding the use of computer systems, email, and the internet.
- No member of the organization may or should express a political opinion on behalf of the organization, unless specifically requested to do so by management or the Board of Directors.
- No member of the organization may use the organization's property, services, equipment, or facilities for political activities or personal purposes, unless expressly authorized to do so.

Showing loyalty includes:

- Respect the conditions of employment, if you are an employee.
- Perform your duties in good faith and in the best interests of the organization.
- Demonstrate professional conscientiousness.
- Contribute to the organization's brand image.
- Refrain from engaging in activities that could discredit the organization and/or jeopardize the bond of trust with partners and the community.
- Respect and protect the organization's intellectual property.

## **Section IX – ACTING WITH TRANSPARENCY**

We only take actions that we could openly discuss in public if required to do so.

This principle is a consequence of all of the above. Indeed, if all the preceding rules have been respected, there is nothing the organization and its members could regret if they had to justify or explain their actions or decisions publicly. This requires everyone to be extremely rigorous in the decision-making process and to demonstrate great integrity throughout the implementation and execution stages, in compliance with charters, laws, regulations, standards, directives, policies, and collective agreements.

## **Section X – ADMINISTRATIVE RULES RESPONSIBLE FOR CODE MANAGEMENT**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for interpreting this Code and receiving reports. However, if a report concerns staff in this Department, it must be forwarded to Senior Management.

Those responsible for interpreting the Code may use any external legal resources deemed appropriate in fulfilling this responsibility.

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

Each manager is responsible for implementing the Code of Conduct within their department or division and must ensure that each person under their responsibility has read its contents, understood, and signed the Code.

Each member of the organization must comply with the Code of Conduct and the rules of ethics, and must notify their superior, the Executive Management, or the Chair of the Board of Directors, as applicable, of any situations where a conflict of interest or breach of duty arises or is suspected.

## **SANCTIONS**

Depending on its severity, a breach or violation of the rules and principles set forth in this code is punishable by disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, termination of contract, or removal from office, as appropriate, in addition to possible legal action.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All reports are handled diligently and discreetly. The identities of informants are kept confidential, unless required by law.

No action will be taken against individuals who, in good faith, avail themselves of the reporting mechanism, even if the investigation reveals.

## **PROCEDURE :**

1. Any violation of this Code must be reported in writing to the Human Resources Department, or to the Chair of the Board of Directors, if the violation involves a committee member or a member of the Board of Directors.
2. The report must contain the following information:
  - The identity of the perpetrator(s) of the violation;
  - A description of the violation;
  - The date or period during which the violation occurred;
  - A copy of any supporting documentation.
3. Any situation arising in a programming community that could be construed as harassment, exploitation, abuse, or corruption/illegality must be reported.
4. If a report is deemed admissible, the person concerned is informed of the allegations and invited to provide their version of events.
5. Within thirty (30) business days of receiving a report or within ten (10) business days of becoming aware of all relevant facts, a report of findings is filed with the Human Resources Department. The person targeted by the report is notified of the measures taken.
6. If the report concerns Human Resources staff, the complaint is forwarded directly to Executive Management. If the report concerns Executive Management, the complaint is forwarded to the Board of Directors. The Board may mandate the Human Resources Department to gather information, consult any documents relevant to the investigation, and meet with any person concerned or involved.

7. In the event of a situation requiring rapid intervention or in a case of alleged serious misconduct, the person targeted by the report may be relieved of their duties during the investigation.

## **Section XI – APPLICATION OF THE CODE IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMANITARIAN AID PROJECTS**

This code complies with the standards issued by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on strengthening humanitarian assistance. General Assembly Resolution 48/57 affirms the role of this committee as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance.

- All humanitarian workers hired by ADER-COV are required to sign a declaration attesting to their commitment to comply with the code of conduct. Before the project launch, these individuals are made aware, individually or during a team meeting, of the issues related to cases of exploitation, sexual abuse, and corruption/illegality. The topic is revisited at a meeting midway through the project. Beneficiaries are informed about the Code of Conduct at the start of the project and also midway through its implementation.

- Two key individuals per project are designated (one from the community and the other from the project staff) to monitor and report potential cases. Beneficiaries may also, under any circumstances, report cases of exploitation, sexual abuse, or corruption/illegality directly to ARAF staff members, project managers, or regional directorates/coordinators, or by using any of the mechanisms provided for in the Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Exploitation, and Sexual Abuse and the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.

- The ADER-COV directorates are responsible for enforcing the provisions of this Code in the programming regions. They are required to take a firm stance against all forms of corruption/illegality, exploitation, and abuse, reminding employees at all levels to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

They are required to inform the organization's Human Resources Department of any reports of sexual exploitation, abuse, or corruption.

- ADER-COV staff and regional management must encourage and support beneficiaries who have experienced sexual exploitation and abuse by the organization's humanitarian staff to file complaints with local authorities for investigations and possible legal action. Obstruction of justice or failure to comply with investigations by local authorities will result in termination of employment.

- Any person accused of sexual exploitation or abuse, corruption, or committing an illegal act will be immediately removed from the humanitarian aid project.



■ Illegal behavior, corruption, or exploitation/abuse of beneficiaries will be considered serious misconduct, subject to sanctions, and may lead to the termination without notice of the services provided by the humanitarian worker in question.

If a report is deemed admissible, the person concerned will be informed of the content of the allegations and invited to provide their version of the facts.

Within thirty (30) working days of receiving a report or within ten (10) working days of becoming aware of all the facts.

### **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, certify that I have read this Code of Conduct, understand its provisions, and agree to abide by it.

I am aware that I must behave in a manner consistent with the organization's values and adhere to the standards of behavior described in this Code.

I understand that a breach of this Code or a violation of one or more of its provisions may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, termination of my contract, or removal from my position.

Witness signature: \_\_\_\_\_ today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_