

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS OF SOGC'S GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Purpose and scope:

The purpose of the SOGC Code of Conduct is to establish a common understanding of the standards of professional and ethical conduct expected from all SOGC employees and volunteers while travelling abroad.

All employees and volunteers going abroad must sign this Code of Conduct, and must be familiar with and adhere to the provisions of this Code of Conduct.

Values and expected behaviour

Professional Conduct

Employees and volunteers must be respectful of the laws of the country and behave in a manner that respects local culture and customs.

Employees and volunteers must be in good standing with their professional college and act accordingly to the Code of Ethics of the Canadian Medical Association, if applicable.

Drug Free Workplace

The use of illegal drugs and the abuse of other controlled substances is forbidden at all times. Employees and volunteers must be familiar with the laws of their country of assignment. Substances that are legal in Canada may not be legal in the country of assignment. If employees or volunteers violate the law in their country of assignment, they are responsible for any lawsuits and legal costs incurred.

Employees and volunteers must abide by the Security Policies and Procedures provided by the main partner and/or the SOGC.

Ethical Photography and use of images

The volunteer or employee who take photos while in mission abroad have an ethical responsibility to preserve the dignity of subjects that they photograph and avoid causing public misperceptions.

The volunteer and the SOGC employee should:

- Comply with local traditions or restrictions when taking photos of people, objects or places.
- Gain written consent before taking photographs or testimonies on behalf of SOGC (Form – Consent to use my likeness and interviews – Adult and Minor)

- Respect a person's right to refuse to be photographed. If the employee or volunteer senses any reluctance or confusion, they should refrain from taking the photo.
- Do no harm. Individuals or groups may be put at risk of reprisal, violence or rejection in their communities as a result of exposing their identity or personal story through the publication of their image.
- Not misrepresent the individual, situation, context or location of the photo.
- Photograph all people with respect and dignity. Special care and compassion must be exercised with vulnerable subjects.
- Take care must in photographing people in times of crisis; do not exploit an individual's vulnerability at times of trauma or grief. Integrity must outweigh costs.

Protocol Regarding Social Media

Employees and volunteers are encouraged to use social media to extend the reach of the SOGC's programming and promote SOGC's programs. However, they must take appropriate measures to prevent any misuse or misconduct that may harm the reputation of the SOGC or the relationships with stakeholders or partners.

Any online behaviour must be consistent with the Code, the organizational values, and the ethics of the SOGC. When a volunteer or employee chooses to post online, they must clearly state that they are speaking as an individual and not as a representative of the SOGC.

Protection against sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation

The SOGC promotes a culture of protection in which sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse is not tolerated. Reports of possible violations are treated seriously and confidentially.

Definitions:

- Sexual harassment includes: Sexist jokes; Display or circulation of sexually offensive slides/cartoons; Sexually degrading words used to describe a person or directed towards members of one sex; Leering (suggestive staring) or other obscene/offensive comments or gestures; Unwelcome physical contact, such as patting, touching, pinching, hitting; Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, propositions; Persistent unwanted contact or attention after the end of a consensual relationship; Requests for sexual favours; Unwanted touching; and Sexual assault.
- Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force, or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- Sexual exploitation is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

The volunteer or employee agrees to:

- Create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, abuse of power, and corruption.
- Never commit any form of harassment that could cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to an individual, especially women and children.
- Never exploit the vulnerability of a target group such as women and children or allow an individual to be put in a compromising situation.
- Never engage in sexual activity with persons under the age of 18, regardless of local legislation regarding the age of majority or consent. A lack of knowledge of the person's actual age cannot be used as a defense.
- Never engage in sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of a target group (men, women, girls and boys). This constitutes serious misconduct and grounds for dismissal.
- Never exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours. All forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour are prohibited.
- Not engage in sexual relations with beneficiaries. It is prohibited because it is based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of the work and global cooperation. This applies both during and outside working hours.
- Not accept or seek sexual services. This rule applies both during and outside working hours.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not through established reporting mechanisms noted below.

The SOGC's role is to:

- Ensure employees and volunteers deployed abroad are informed, receive training, and understand the requirements of the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that all confidential information, including reports of violations of these standards by colleagues, obtained from beneficiaries or other sources, is handled properly and with the utmost confidentiality.
- Ensure that reports of violations of these standards are immediately reported. Those who receive these reports will investigate immediately.
- Ensure that the process is victim-oriented and support his/her needs.

Protection of Children

Employees and Volunteers participating to missions further agree to:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- Not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- Not engage children under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally, in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence;
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- Not invite unaccompanied children into their home, their hotel rooms or other accommodation unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children;

- Not use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, digital cameras or social media inappropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material through any medium;
- Not use physical punishment on children;
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;
- Comply with all relevant international and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.

When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work related purposes, employees and volunteers also must:

- Before photographing or filming a child:
 - assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
 - obtain informed consent from the child and a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this, they must explain how the photograph or film will be used;
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

Safety and Security

The SOGC is concerned with the health and safety of volunteers and their employees. It is expected that volunteers and employees will take responsibility for safe and healthy work practices for themselves and for other volunteers and colleagues, and to familiarize themselves with the Global Health Program Safety and Security policy and statement of ethics.

Violation of the Code

The violation of any provision of the Code by an employees or volunteer may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or termination of the contract, particularly for sexual exploitation and abuse which constitute acts of gross misconduct.

Duty to Report Violations of the Code

As part of our mutual accountability towards the SOGC, each of us, volunteers and employees, have a duty to report any violation of the Code by speaking confidentially to the project manager/specialist.

A reported offense will be handled in an impartial manner towards any named individual, taking into account the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the information or allegations, and the

possibility of an impartial investigation. The following process will be applied when a violation is committed, suspected or observed:

- The employee or volunteer shall report the violation, in a confidential manner, to the project manager/specialist or the Chief Scientific Officer;
- An investigation is conducted and a report is drafted by the project manager/specialist;
- Relevant authorities are informed (i.e.: Donors);
- An appropriate resolution and choice of action is determined;
- If unresolved, the leadership team and human resource advisor can be consulted for input.

Duty to Report Credible Allegations to Global Affairs Canada

An allegation is credible when the source, nature, and information of the report suggest that the allegation is plausible and warrants further investigation. Cases occurring in the delivery of Canadian-funded projects include cases that:

- are perpetrated by employees or associated personnel working on an initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada
- may have a negative impact on the reputation of Global Affairs Canada or of a partner funded by Global Affairs Canada

Global Affairs Canada expects partner organizations to:

- report allegations within 48 hours of determining that an allegation is credible.
- inform their Global Affairs Canada project officer if the issue will affect project implementation.
- fill out the [Reporting Form – Sexual exploitation and abuse allegations in international assistance](#) and email it to the Global Affairs Canada PSEA Focal Point at PSEA-PEAS@international.gc.ca.

Off duty conduct:

Employees and volunteers should remember that are SOGC's representatives at all times, even when off duty. Off duty activities which, in the absence of reasonable justification, adversely affect employees, volunteers, delegates or clients of the Society, or which, when seen through the eyes of a reasonable observer, discredit the SOGC, are also breaches of the Code of Conduct.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to abide by the SOGC's Code of Conduct for volunteers and employees abroad and to abide by its requirements and commit to upholding the standards of conduct required to support SOGC's aims, values and mission.

(Date)

I recognize that a violation of any of these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Employee/Volunteer Name (Print)

Employee/Volunteer Signature

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