CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICAL STANDARDS

Integrity in action.

The ethical, professional and behavioural standards expected of everyone who works for, represents or acts on behalf of ACHCGA.

AFRICAN CENTER FOR HEALTH, CLIMATE & GENDER JUSTICE ALLIANCE

> ***Nothing for us without us.***

Our guiding principle. Communities are decision-makers, not passive recipients of assistance.

WHY THIS CODE EXISTS

Ethics that protect people

This Code sets clear standards for integrity, accountability, transparency, respect and responsible conduct across every ACHCGA programme, partnership and operation. It protects our institutional integrity, upholds the rights and dignity of the communities we serve, and keeps our resources, relationships and decisions guided by justice, equality, inclusion and accountability.

We work with women, girls, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons, Indigenous Peoples, refugees and others facing structural marginalisation. Everyone bound by this Code must protect their agency, safety, dignity and rights.

WHO THIS CODE BINDS

- Board members and organisational leadership
- Employees and programme personnel
- Consultants, advisors and contractors
- Interns, volunteers and fellows
- Project officers and community mobilisers
- Implementing partners and representatives
- Suppliers and other engaged third parties

Irrespective of contract type or length of engagement.

OUR TEN STANDARDS

What we hold ourselves to

01 Integrity & Professional Conduct

Act with honesty, impartiality, professionalism and good judgement. Put the best interests of ACHCGA and the communities we serve first, and avoid conduct that erodes trust or credibility.

02 Human Rights, Dignity & Equality

Treat colleagues, beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders with dignity, whatever their gender, age, disability, ethnicity, nationality or status. No discrimination, intimidation, bullying or abuse.

03 Safeguarding & Protection from Exploitation and Abuse

Never exploit position, authority or resources for sexual, financial or other benefit. Respect consent, confidentiality and boundaries, and report every concern through designated channels.

04 Transparency & Accountability

Conduct decisions, activities and transactions openly and responsibly. Keep accurate records, give truthful information and cooperate with legitimate reviews, financial assessments and audits.

05 Conflict of Interest

Avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts and disclose them promptly. Never use influence or relationships to favour relatives or associates, or to sway procurement, recruitment or partnerships.

06 Fraud, Bribery & Corruption

Zero tolerance for fraud, bribery, embezzlement, collusion and misuse of resources. Never solicit, offer or accept improper payments, gifts or favours; follow approval and documentation procedures.

07 Confidentiality & Information Management

Protect confidential organisational, financial, personal and programme information. Take special care with data on children and survivors of violence; no photos or testimonies without consent.

08 Respectful Partnerships & Community Engagement

Communities are rights-holders and agents of change. Engage inclusively and participatively; never manipulate participation, impose decisions, withhold information or undermine agency.

09 Environmental & Social Responsibility

Act in line with our commitment to climate, health and gender justice: promote environmental responsibility, equitable use of resources, inclusion and the rights of present and future generations.

10 Non-Retaliation & Whistleblower Protection

No intimidation, victimisation or retaliation against anyone who reports misconduct in good faith. Every report is handled with confidentiality, impartiality and sensitivity.

RED LINES

Zero tolerance. Zero complacency.

- ✕ Any sexual activity or relationship with a child, whatever local law says
- ✕ Exchanging money, jobs, goods or services for sexual favours
- ✕ Sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation or abuse of authority
- ✕ Soliciting, offering or accepting improper payments or favours
- ✕ Failing to report a concern, or pressuring someone not to
- ✕ Retaliating against anyone who reports in good faith

OUR COMMITMENT

A culture of integrity

- Clear ethical standards for all who represent us
- Communities' dignity, rights, safety and agency protected
- Abuse, harassment, discrimination, fraud and corruption prevented
- Transparent, responsible financial management
- Ethical leadership, strong governance and partnerships that reflect our values

REPORTING, INVESTIGATION & ENFORCEMENT

Speak up. We will listen.

1. **Any manager, the Safeguarding Focal Point or HR** - verbal or written
2. **Safeguarding email & hotline** - published in every office, on our website and in community materials
3. **Community complaint boxes & feedback sessions** - at field sites and distribution points
4. **Independent Board channel** - Board Chair or independent person, for concerns about senior leadership
5. **Partner & donor reporting line** - for concerns within funded partner organisations

Every channel accepts anonymous reports. You never have to confront the person concerned, and you may ask for your identity to be withheld.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

2 days
Report acknowledged; anonymous case reference issued

3 days
Triage and safety check; authorities notified where legally required

5 days
Investigator appointed, free of any conflict of interest

30 days
Written findings on the balance of probabilities

+10 days
Decision, action and feedback to the person who reported

PROPORTIONATE CONSEQUENCES, APPLIED WITH FAIRNESS AND DUE PROCESS

LOW
Minor boundary lapse, first occurrence
Coaching, retraining, documented warning

MODERATE
Repeated boundary violation; non-sexual harassment
Formal disciplinary action, up to termination

SEVERE
Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment; abuse of a child
Immediate suspension, termination, referral to authorities

MY COMMITMENT I have read and understood this Code and will uphold it in everything I do for ACHCGA.

Name _____ Position _____ Signature _____ Date _____