



Institutional directives

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## Code of conduct: Prevention of abuse and safeguarding

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Federal Executive Division  
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# Code of conduct: Prevention of abuse and safeguarding

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# 1.

## Introduction

### 1.1

#### Why the need for a code of conduct?

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Humanity & Inclusion (HI) is an international aid and development organisation engaged in promoting the rights of people with disabilities and vulnerable people, and human rights in general. The respect and dignity of the people concerned, i.e. the beneficiaries of our actions, and of their communities are at the heart of the engagement of HI's staff and collaborators in all intervention settings. HI's reputation depends to a large extent on the quality and accountability of its staff, and so on their conduct. Even during difficult missions, HI aims to promote engagement of the highest quality. Non-respect of the organisation's values undermines the reputation of the whole organisation. It is important to bear in mind that each member of our organisation represents HI both during and outside working hours. HI's staff regularly find themselves in positions of trust or power with regard to the beneficiaries and communities concerned. They may

not feel this to be the case, but it is the unavoidable result of the economic and symbolic differences between an NGO's personnel and the people benefiting from its actions. Demonstrating awareness of this and respect for HI's values means behaving in an appropriate fashion and feeling responsible for and complying with its codes and ethical principles.

### 1.2

#### What are the foundations of this code of conduct

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This code of conduct is a key component of our **institutional policies** which define the fundamental principles guaranteeing the protection of our beneficiaries – notably those most exposed to the abuse of power, with a particular focus on sexual exploitation and abuse – and of our own staff.

These policies are notably:

- **Protection of beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse**
- **Child protection**
- **Fight against fraud and corruption.**

## The principles on which these policies are based are as follows:

- Respect for fundamental human rights, including the rights of the child, disability rights and international humanitarian law,
- Zero tolerance on the part of the organisation with regard to violations of these rights by its staff and associates, and at all times,
- Risk management, including establishing a protective environment,
- The duty of assistance to victims,
- The duty to report all incidents, doubts or suspicions of abuse, even in the absence of proof.

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This code of conduct aims to protect all the beneficiaries of HI's actions, direct and indirect, as well as people in the communities in contact with these actions, especially children, women, people with disabilities and anyone in a situation of vulnerability.

## 1.3

### What purpose will the code serve?

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**The code sets forth the expected behaviours and practices constituting the organisation's minimum standards and actions to be avoided** to ensure relations with the beneficiaries or between members of HI's staff are respectful of the ethics developed by the organisation via its policies. Its purpose is therefore to help staff:

- understand their obligations and responsibilities with regard to the above-mentioned policies put in place by HI,
- take the appropriate decisions and adopt appropriate behaviour in both their professional and private lives.

Managers have the additional responsibility of ensuring their team members respect this code by ensuring an exemplary working environment.

## 1.4

### To whom does it apply?

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The Code, which must be signed personally by all the people concerned, applies world-wide to anyone working on behalf of HI or as part of a project or an action conducted with HI, whether recruited internationally or nationally or working on an ad hoc basis on HI's projects and actions. It thus applies to all **people having signed a permanent or fixed-term employment contract with HI, as well as any family members accompanying international staff, as well as to consultants, interns, voluntary workers or international volunteers, service providers and partner organisations, by dint of their collaboration with HI.**

It applies to all these people in all situations, professional or otherwise, during working hours and outside working hours. **For simplicity's sake, these people will be referred to as "HI staff and collaborators" in this document.**

All those concerned by this code of conduct are expected to encourage, defend and promote its application and the values it represents.

## 1.5

### What is the role and importance of this code of conduct?

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This code of conduct is the tangible reflection of our institutional protection policies. It is an addition to the existing documents for defining HI's working environment, which are:

- Humanity & Inclusion's Charter and byelaws,
- the Rules of Procedure, which notably define psychological and sexual harassment,
- the general and specific terms and conditions of engagement, which define the contractual conditions for international staff and national staff,
- the employment contract, service contract or any other formalisation of a professional relationship, which is specific to each person or situation and makes reference to all the rules to be applied.

This code of conduct does not replace these documents.

## 2.

### Code of conduct

**In every context, regardless of the emergency of the situation, as a member of HI staff or as a collaborator, I commit to respect the following:**

## 2.1

### Relations

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I will always make sure that beneficiaries (including children), staff and partners are treated with respect, dignity and equality regardless of their age, sex, physical condition, impairment, language, religion, opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, status, class, caste, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristics.

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I will always promote non-violent and positive behaviour when supervising or interacting with beneficiaries.

I will never touch beneficiaries in an inappropriate manner.

I will never use language or make suggestions to provoke, harass or degrade the person or knowingly show disrespect for traditional/cultural practices.

I will never subject a beneficiary to any kind of humiliating, degrading or abusive behaviour, whether physical, verbal or psychological or of other nature.

I will always inform beneficiaries (including children) and communities of their right to report any worrying situations, especially related to intimacy issues and how they can raise a concern.

I will always try to take into account the capacity of the beneficiary to participate, to respect his/her opinion, choices and autonomy, not doing things of a personal nature that the beneficiary can do for themselves (e.g. toileting/ changing clothes, etc.).

I will always pay specific attention to people facing obstacles or difficulties in communicating or fully expressing themselves (related to impairment, mobility, gender or any other reason) by providing appropriate, adequate and safe communication spaces and tools.

When I am in contact with a beneficiary (with a special attention to children and women as well as men with disabilities), I will always make sure that the beneficiary is visible to another adult.

## 2.2

### Elimination of sexual exploitation and abuse situations

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I will never engage in any form of sexual relations with anyone under 18 years old, regardless of the age set by the sexual majority, the law or local customs. Mistaking a child's age is not a defence.

I will never engage in any form of sexual relations or favours in exchange for money, gifts, job or humanitarian aid even if the person proposed this exchange in the first place, or is expecting it to happen. This applies in all circumstances, whether this person is identified as a prostitute, is being promoted by a third party as such or none of the two.

I will never directly or indirectly use an adult or a child to provide sexual services to third parties, support, facilitate or participate to any form of prostitution or sexual exploitation.

I will never sexually exploit a beneficiary or engage a child in labour (including domestic work) against access to aid, or any kind of benefit.

## 2.3

### Work environment

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I will always treat beneficiaries or children in an equitable and fair way, never discriminating against them for example by favouritism or by excluding others.

I will always show respect to all categories of employees, partner's staff, community volunteers or beneficiaries.

I will never engage in or tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation or favouritism in the workplace, including sexual and psychological harassment and abuse of power, respecting the rules that apply to me (especially Internal Rules) on these issues.

I will always behave in a professional way with colleagues, avoiding spreading rumours and false allegations and refraining from any comment based on gender, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristics – which may be considered as harassment.

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I will always assess the risk of harm of any sort and organise the workplace and plan activities so as to minimize it, taking into account the impairment, health condition, age and development of the child or any other condition or vulnerability of staff and beneficiaries.

I will always plan activities ensuring that information concerning beneficiaries, children, families and communities remains confidential.

I will never invite a beneficiary (especially a child), to my home or offer personal transport or maintain any private contact (telephone, social media) without any professional reasons and without clear permission from my manager.



## 2.4

### Communication

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I will always ensure, when photography or video is taken with the proper authorization, that the person does not pose in a degrading manner or in a way that may be interpreted by others as having sexual connotations.

I will always use respectful words and the people's names when speaking to them and to other persons or communicating on them.

I will never watch, publish, produce, or share pornography showing children, and / or show such material to children.

I will always ensure that all audio, written or visual communication respects the dignity and human rights of the person featured (including anonymity when necessary and for all children) and does not expose her or him to any risk of retaliation or abuse of any nature.

I will always ensure when taking and publishing photos that beneficiaries or children are not naked or dressed in a manner which is not adapted to the situation in which they are represented.

I will never show the faces of beneficiaries or children who are exploited sexually, victim of trafficking or abuse, in conflict with the law, linked to armed groups or who can easily be located even if their identity has been modified.

## 2.5

### Reporting

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I will always raise any concern and query concerning the present Code of conduct, the PSEA and the Child Protection Policy with my manager / supervisor, or if not possible, with another from my hierarchy or with a designated focal person (according to internal reporting rules).

I will immediately report any suspicions or allegations of behaviour going against the principles of the present Code of conduct, the PSEA and the Child Protection Policy to my manager/supervisor – even if the information or allegation is vague and without having investigated it personally.

I will never purposely make false accusations against a colleague or any other person of breaking the provisions of this code of conduct.

For **people who are part of HI (members and personnel)**, a professional whistle-blowing mechanism is available on Hinside, the organisation's platform for internal communication and collaboration: [https://hinside.hi.org/intranet/jcms/prod\\_2149085/en/professional-whistle-blowing-mechanism](https://hinside.hi.org/intranet/jcms/prod_2149085/en/professional-whistle-blowing-mechanism)

For **people from outside HI** (beneficiaries, partners, suppliers, others), a complaint system is available on the organisation's website: <https://hi.org/en/institutional-and-professional-information#ancre10>

Or write to the following address:

Humanity & Inclusion

Complaints

138 avenue des Frères Lumière

CS 88379

69371 Lyon Cedex 08

France

## Contact:

Human Resources Division

On 24 January 2018, Handicap International's global movement became Humanity & Inclusion. The Federation, which runs projects in around sixty countries, is now working under the operating names of "Humanity & Inclusion", "Handicap International" or "Atlas Logistique". Any document with the letterhead "Humanity & Inclusion" applies de facto to Atlas Logistique and Handicap International teams.



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As an aid and development organisation promoting respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of people with disabilities and vulnerable populations, HI is committed to ensuring the protection not just of its beneficiaries, but also of all those in contact with its actions.

Each member of HI represents the organisation and is responsible for safeguarding its image. Any lack of respect for its values damages HI's reputation and can undermine the legitimacy of its actions.

This Code of conduct outlines the behaviours and practices expected of you with regard to the protection of beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as the actions to be avoided in order to guarantee that the relations created within our teams, with our beneficiaries and with all those in contact with our organisation are respectful of HI's ethics and, more generally, of the values it defends.

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