

Zimbabwe NGO CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

We, the NGOs operating in Zimbabwe recognise and reaffirm our commitment to be transparent in our actions and to be accountable to the public we serve, the government and our donors. We reaffirm our commitment to attaining the highest possible standards and our recognition of the need for self-regulation.

The code of ethics will enable NGOs to respond to challenges that are constantly changing and arising. In this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to the values and principles set out in this document

1. Definition of terms

Act means the Non-Governmental Organisations Act [*Chapter*]

“NGO” means an organisation as defined in the NGO Act Chapter and not exempt from the Act .

2. Values

Although we engage in diverse activities, we have one constituency and that is the public. Our aim is to improve the welfare of the people we serve. We therefore commit ourselves to the following:

- To carry out our work for the public interest and remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people we serve and ensure that our projects are not donor driven.
- To adhere to the principles of good governance.
- To maintain confidentiality in all our work.
- To promote organisational integrity
- To be accountable to the public we serve, the government and donors in the use of resources.
- To be non - partisan and non - discriminatory.

3. Governance

To be able to function effectively, we need to put in place sound governance structures manned by experienced, committed and responsible individuals. To this end we will:

- Ensure that organisations have a clear vision, mission, objectives and policies and that these are adhered to.
- Democratically elect people who will serve as office bearers.
- Ensure that those elected to power are persons with moral integrity and high moral values and that they relinquish their positions after a given period.
- Ensure gender equality in the appointment of office bearers.
- Specify the governance structures, frequency of meetings, quorums, remuneration and the office bearers' role in the organisation
- Avoid conflict of interest between NGO leadership and staff in their political and NGO interests.
- Ensure that the governance structures guide the organisation policies and that the leadership understands these structures and assumes overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to the organisational policies.
- The governance structures must guide the organisation in its activities, financial management and the appointment of auditors to audit the accounts.
- Give adequate space to NGOs, staff and project beneficiaries to determine their roles and responsibilities in society and development in general.

4. Accountability

Accountability involves a culture of promoting democracy and transparency in our work. To this end we will:

- Be accountable to the government, donors and the public in our actions and decisions.
- Account fully for the financial resources received from donors, government, members, and partner organisations and fund from self-generated activities.
- Ensure stakeholder participation in the planning and implementation and evolution of programmes.
- Undergo regular evaluations of the programmes.
- Hold strategic planning meetings annually which will act as a tool for self-evaluation.

5. Organisational integrity

As organisations, we value the principles of integrity and to this end we affirm our commitment to:

- Comply fully with laws and regulations that govern NGO work.
- Comply fully with all the provisions of anti-discrimination laws.
- Clearly define management and staff roles and responsibilities to avoid conflicts within organisations. Such roles must be properly documented and communicated to all.
- Evolve and implement participatory democracy in management to ensure ownership of the programmes and activities and quality of decision making.

6. Management of human resources

As human beings working in the NGO sector, we are individuals coming from different and diverse backgrounds. It is this diversity that binds us together. To this end we will:

- Adhere to the Labour Relations legislation.
- Develop clear and defined guidelines and written policies and procedures which must be followed by all employees.
- Develop and implement a clear grievance handling procedure with clear lines of authority and accountability.
- Employ, promote, train or send for training staff members under clear and transparent procedures.
- Have clear staff development policies.
- Recognise and appreciate different skills and expertise that staff have and tap into these.
- Respect and protect staff's constitutional rights of freedom of expression, movement, conscience and association.
- If possible, put in place incentives to motivate and retain professionally qualified staff.
- Have a clear and transparent salary, benefits and allowances policy.

7. Capacity building

As NGOs, we operate in a constantly changing environment. We realise that we need to equip and re-equip ourselves in order to meet the new challenges, responsibilities as well as an increased demand for our services. To this end, we re-affirm our commitment to:

- Empower staff members in decision making by decentralising the decision making process.
- Keep staff abreast of technological changes and advances

- Train project beneficiaries in project management and implementation so that even if the NGO discontinues its work with those beneficiaries, the project will be managed and sustained by the beneficiaries.
- Establish a network of similar or likeminded organisations so that they can tap into each other's skills and expertise.

8. Networking

As NGOs, we have a shared vision and values. No NGO can operate in a vacuum without the support of others. We therefore commit ourselves to:

- Create networks so as to share ideas and objectives. This will avoid duplicating activities and reduce competition for scarce resources.
- Through networks, we disseminate information, share experiences and best practices without compromising institutional confidentiality.
- Referring members of the public to appropriate NGOs because we will have the right information on projects and activities.
- Better co-ordination when dealing with issues of mutual concern. This will ensure that our efforts are not fragmented. That way, we will have greater impact.

9. Financial management

Our finances must be managed to ensure appropriate use of funds and accountability to the donors, government and the public. To this end we will:

- Comply with accepted business accounting and auditing practices, including voucher and authorisation processes.
- Ensure that audits are carried out by independent auditors who are registered with the Institute Of Chartered Accountants Zimbabwe.
- Put in place a transparent tender system and encourage participation by women and indigenous owned businesses in the tender process.
- Set up appropriate in house financial systems and employ qualified personnel to administer and manage the system.
- Have clear policies on staff salaries, consultancies, honoraria and per diems to avoid double payments.
- Ensure that staff or the leadership of NGOs have no vested interest in companies, firms and individuals where goods are purchased from
- Have a clear policy on staff loans and use of vehicles belonging to the NGO.
- Ensure that we adhere to the project budget and that, before making changes to the budget, we will consult with relevant interested parties.
- Ensure that funds are only used for their intended purpose.
- Publicly announce any charges against a member for fraud, theft, misappropriation of funds or any attempt to commit these crimes.

10. FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Resource mobilisation and financial sustainability pose great challenges to NGOs especially in the environment of a shrinking donor base. To this end we commit ourselves to:

- Engage in transparent fundraising practices.
- Disclose to all donors actual or potential, the sources and use of funds in the event that we intend to raise funds from more than one donor.
- If raising funds on behalf of communities, to inform the communities of the fund raising efforts and involve the communities in the process.
- Avoid diverting funds for purposes other than those for which they were intended and obtain donor authority to alter the purpose for which donated funds can be used.
- Ensure that financial support does not compromise our independence and autonomy.
- Move away from the culture of being donor dependent.
- Be innovative in raising funds within the confines of the laws of Zimbabwe.

11. Resources

Organisational assets need to be used in a transparent and cost effective manner. To this end we will:

- Develop in-house mechanisms to control and monitor the use of assets.
- Ensure that staff members are accountable for the time spent at work.
- Develop and implement policies on private and organisational use of assets.

12. Management of the Code

For the Code to be effective, it needs to be managed by a body, which is made up of people of high moral values. NANGO will oversee the implementation of the Code. NANGO will have the following responsibilities:

- Creating awareness of the Code among NGOs and stakeholders.
- Ensuring the mainstreaming of the Code in all NGO functions and operations.
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Code.
- Recording all views on amendments to the Code proposed by NGOs
- Recommending any changes to the Code and such amendments will only be effected after the approval of the majority of NGOs at a meeting specifically constituted to review the Code.
- In terms of section 37(2) of the Act, to take the necessary steps to rehabilitate, re-align, correct or otherwise assist an organisation to rectify or stop the alleged violation.

- Convene a meeting once a year of NGOs to review their performance with regards to implementation of the Code.

13. Monitoring and evaluation

Adherence to the code will be monitored as follows:

- By individual NGOs in their day to day operations.
- By NANGO through an external evaluation carried out once every year.
- Guidelines shall be developed to give effect to the code from time to time.

14 Adoption of the Code of Conduct

Every member of NANGO Shall be bound by the code of conduct and a rating system shall be used to measure compliance to the code of conduct.

Non members may also choose to comply with the code of conduct if they sign a declaration to that effect