

CIVIL SOCIETY



CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

- As members of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) Civil Society Bahamas has accepted the CPDC Code of Conduct and encourages its members to adopt these core principles in conducting their affairs.

PREAMBLE

- Cognisant of the need to practise good conduct at all times in carrying out the role and functions of the non-governmental sector, Civil Society Bahamas, as a member of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) promotes this Code of Conduct and Ethics (hereinafter also referred to as The Code) for the guidance of all members, volunteers and staff of civil society organizations (CSOs) in The Bahamas. The Code is aimed at fostering good relations between CSOs (NGOs) and the constituents that they serve and at ensuring that all CSO activities are conducive to the attainment of a high level of respect among practitioners, beneficiaries, donors and partners.

PREAMBLE (CONT.)

- The Code affirms the responsibility of social development practitioners to serve the collective interests of their constituents and the people of the region and to upholding and defending their freedoms and human rights; as practitioners, we are required to exercise good judgment in implementing our programmes and in cultivating relationships with various partners.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

- I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:
- The guiding and governing principles shall be translated into the internal rules of organizations.
- CSOs commit to:
 - a) Maintaining the principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, equity, social justice and non-discrimination.
 - b) Promoting participatory governance, monitoring and evaluation, ethical fundraising and autonomy in decision-making.
 - c) Respecting and maintaining cultural and religious traditions, human rights, universal freedoms and gender equality.
 - d) Continuing to be responsive to the needs of members and stakeholders, practise responsible advocacy, provide quality service, encourage professional development and construct positive relationships, partnerships and networks on the basis of solidarity, confidentiality and information exchange.
 - e) Continuing to exercise a responsible and responsive management approach to the environmental sustainability and the eco-system in all activities.

2. GOVERNANCE

- 2. Governance within Caribbean CSOs/NGOs shall be guided by good governance principles of equity and inclusion, participation, transparency and accountability
- In keeping with the Human Rights based approach articulated in the principles of this Code, CSOs shall refrain from discrimination on the basis of age, class, gender, sexual orientation, minority, geographic location, race, religion or disability in all programmes and staff positions.

GOVERNANCE (CONT.)

- NGOs shall:
- Ensure that their activities conform to their stated purposes.
- Ensure the participation of stakeholders in the identification, design and execution of the policies, programmes and projects.
- Implement organizational activities conducive to public trust within the CSO sector.
- Ensure that they and their staff maintain a position of political neutrality in their operations and respect the office of all duly elected governments in keeping with the democratic traditions of the region.
- Refrain from deliberate involvement in any activity which might bring the institution into disrepute.
- Exhaust conciliatory solutions to conflicts internally and with third parties
- Be accountable for the actions and decisions, not only to donors and governments but primarily to project beneficiaries and staff.
- Commit themselves to building the capacity of its directors, staff and members to enhance their participation and contribution to the attainment of the organization's missions and goals.

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- Ensure that no conflict of interest exists between members of the board or members of the staff in the conduct of the affairs of the organizations and that these persons demonstrate high moral values and integrity.
 - Require board members to give the best service as directors at all times acting in the best interest of the organization.
 - Promote good relations among and between board members, members, staff and beneficiaries.
 - Ensure that serving board members shall not receive a salary, for work or act as paid consultants to the organization except that this work is offered in a strictly professional capacity for which a reimbursement or stipend may be agreed
 - Maintain the confidentiality of personal information on staff, clients and others, unless the individuals waive this right, or disclosure is required by law.
 - Privileged or confidential information regarding donors or donations shall not be disclosed to unauthorized parties without the authority of the specific donor.

3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 CSOs shall:
- Exercise high standards of financial propriety in the management of finances and adhere to all national and/or international and universally accepted accounting standards and procedures.
- Be accountable for financial resources received from donors, government, members, other partner organizations or self-generated activities at all times.
- Ensure that contributions are used as promised and implied in the fundraising appeal and as specified in the contribution agreement.
- Carry out due diligence checks when dealing with individuals and companies acting as donors to avoid damage to the reputation of the organization.
- Ensure that fundraising will be truthful; avoiding the use of high-pressure tactics in soliciting donations.
- High pressure tactics refer to the use of any illegal threat and include but are not limited to: the use of manipulation; force; fear; physical intimidation; aggression and fraud
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4. RELATIONS WITH BENEFICIARIES

- 4.1 CSOs shall:
- Work with beneficiaries in the pursuit of a just and humane society.
- Ensure that relationships with beneficiaries should be based on mutual trust, openness and respect for their autonomy and independence
- Give priority to strengthening the capacity of vulnerable groups to achieve autonomy and self-reliance.
- Foster meaningful participation of beneficiaries in identification of community needs and design of programmes;
- Assist those at risk without any discrimination;
- Ensure that all communications shall be respectful of people in every sense

5. RELATIONS WITH CBOS AND OTHER CSOS AT LOCAL, AND NATIONAL

- 5.1 CSOs shall:
- Treat each other and all other civil society organizations with respect to their areas of focus, expertise, and diversity of approaches.
- Be encouraged to share information on programmes and objectives where possible;
- Seek to cooperate and collaborate with other CSOs and CBOs in the implementation of programmes to the benefit of target groups and the wider society where possible;
- Seek to develop partnerships with the aim of minimizing duplication and maximizing efficient use of resources
- Strive for the autonomy and protection of the rights of civil society organizations;
- Be encouraged to express solidarity with campaigns and actions of other organizations where these are consistent with the CSOs institutional purpose;
- Act in concert to promote the growth and effectiveness of the sector.

6. RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL CSOS AND DONOR PARTNERS

- CSOs shall:
- Ensure adequate consultations among the sector members on key issues in order to ensure fair representation of the CSO sector's views.
- Strive to have their agendas set by members and target communities and shall impress this policy on donor partners and international CSOs;
- Work on global issues of concern in concert with donor partners and international CSOs on a basis that does not compromise the integrity of the CSO;
- Subject its collaboration with international CSOs and donor partners to the scrutiny and evaluation of its members;
- Strive to ensure that modes of collaboration with donor partners reflect the best practices of good partnership, ensuring respect for autonomy, independence and diversity of approaches
- Ensure that CSO representation in national, regional and international fora will always be based on an organization's primary mandate and programme focus.
- Insist that CSO representatives to international fora have an obligation to report back to the CSO community on the outcomes of their mission.



7. RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS

- 7.1 CSOs shall:
- Seek partnerships with Governments based on the processes outlined in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas as well as the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society and acting in adherence to the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Ensure that Government partnerships shall be undertaken on the basis of mutual respect for the independence, autonomy and diversity of approaches of all partners
- Participate where appropriate in dialogue and cooperation with Government agencies towards the attainment of sustainable human development.

8. RELATIONS WITH LABOUR, PRIVATE SECTOR, MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTIES

- 8.1 CSOs shall:
- Be as neutral and professional as possible
- Respect the special roles of Trade Unions and the Private Sector in the pursuit of national and regional development;
- Respect the media as both a stakeholder group and as a channel of communication;
- Note the important role of political parties in promoting democratic traditions of our countries.
- Explore all opportunities for cooperation and strive for optimal developmental partnerships with the media, private sector, trade unions and political parties, being guided by the values and principles of this Code of Ethics and Conduct.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES

- 9.1 CSOs shall:
- Develop and promote clear and measurable impact indicators for all programmes and projects undertaken in order to gauge their relevance and effectiveness.
- Formalise various monitoring and evaluation tools to gauge performance in relation to established objectives goals of activities.
- Provide to the public the findings of any assessments or evaluations of projects.

10. UPHOLDING THE CODE

- The Code contributes to the recognition of CSOs as Social Partners in Development and providing for their registration and general operations in CARICOM countries. Enforcement of the Code is within the authority of the CSO Commission provided for in the CSO Bill. The Code affirms the values and principles of the CARICOM Charter for Civil Society and is offered as a civil society pledge of good faith in the positive engagement between policy makers and practitioners in the interest of sustainable human development in the Caribbean. In the pursuit of excellence in all areas of operations within the development sector, NGOs/CSOs shall observe the stated good practices

THANK YOU

