

# Code of Conduct

## of the Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e. V.

As an organisation of the Protestant Church, the Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e. V. (EWDE, Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development) carries out the work of the German Protestant Federal Association, the Development Service, worldwide inter-church aid and humanitarian aid. The agency fulfils its mission through Diakonie Deutschland, Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Together as one voice, we stand up for people who are suffering from hardship, poverty and injustice – in Germany and throughout the whole world.

**Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e. V.**

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Berlin, November 2019, 1<sup>st</sup> edition

“Whatever you do,  
whether in word or deed,  
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”



(from Colossians 3:17a)

## Declaration of the Executive Board

Our goal is a fair world free from hunger and poverty, in which every human being has the chance to lead a life in dignity. We are committed to helping disadvantaged people and perceive our mission as neighbourly love in action. EWDE employees are at the heart of our organisation. We want to offer them a safe working environment in which self-determination, openness and constructive criticism are highly regarded. Every day, our employees work with people and partners in Germany and around the world, carrying out a wide variety of tasks. The principles set out in this Code of Conduct form the framework of our common action. Compliance with these rules is of utmost importance for the success and core values of our agency.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to support the Executive Board as well as all executives and employees of the EWDE in making ethically and legally sound decisions<sup>1</sup>. The EWDE Code of Conduct is supplemented by specific policies, strategies, guidelines and other internal documents on selected topics. The Code of Conduct is an expression of our willingness to handle the risks involved in our work with the utmost care.

### 2. Scope of application

This Code of Conduct is binding for the Executive Board, all executives and employees of the EWDE worldwide and is an integral part of their employment contracts. The principles of the Code of Conduct also apply to employees with local employment contracts, consultants, professionals and volunteers, and are integrated into the corresponding contracts. In addition, the principles set out in the Code of Conduct apply to our cooperation agreements with partners as well as our procurement guidelines for service providers.

### 3. Theological foundation

*“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus”  
(from Colossians 3:17a)*

As a Protestant Church agency, we share the fundamental conviction of Christian tradition that faith, life and action form a unity. Our mission is to be a witness, a sign and an instrument for God’s unconditional love for all in His creation, especially for the poor and marginalised, and to help them lead dignified lives. This is reflected in a conduct that affirms this mission by unconditionally recognising and protecting the dignity of others. Irrespective of our personal closeness or distance towards certain elements of the Protestant faith, we are loyal to the agency’s ecclesiastical mandate. Furthermore, as part of our work, we also want to live and act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code of

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<sup>1</sup> In the following, “we” or “us” are always understood as including the Executive Board, executives and all employees of EWDE. Where rules refer to specific groups of people, they are explicitly named.

Conduct, insofar as this affects our official credibility and integrity. The following directives are not about perfectionism or a culture of mutual control and condemnation, but about basic orientations that ensure a common line of credibility, both internally and externally, for everyone.

#### 4. Principles guiding our actions

The inviolability of human dignity and the principles of our Leitlinie Integrität (“Integrity Policy”)<sup>2</sup> are our guiding principles. In order to reach people and support them in their specific circumstances, we treat them with empathy, respect and appreciation.

We are committed to the following principles:

- Inviolability of the dignity of all human beings
- Protection of human rights
- Respect for diversity of religions, beliefs and cultures
- Participation and inclusion
- Accountability and transparency
- Social, environmental and economic sustainability
- Responsibility in exercising power and managing resources
- Observance of the “do no harm” principle<sup>3</sup>
- Good leadership, compliance and the “four-eyes principle”<sup>4</sup>
- Trust and appreciation

We are committed to structures that promote action in accordance with these principles. These include the substantiation of ethical standards as well as the establishment and maintenance of a complaint management system. In particular, executives are committed to ensuring the personal integrity of their employees and to take a clear stand at the first sign of violation of the Code of Conduct. Together, we create a climate in which the abuse of entrusted power is prevented. The relationship between development cooperation and humanitarian aid is usually characterised by strong dependencies and power asymmetries. Those working abroad for the EWDE therefore bear a special responsibility as representatives of the EWDE to uphold these principles and to protect the reputation of the EWDE.

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<sup>2</sup> See “Leitlinie Integrität des Evangelischen Werks für Diakonie und Entwicklung e. V.” (“EWDE Integrity Policy”; available only in German) adopted by the Executive Board at its meeting of 16/11/2017.

<sup>3</sup> “Do no harm” is a fundamental principle of international emergency and development aid whereby organisations check their actions to see whether they have undesirable and negative effects.

<sup>4</sup> The principle states that at least two people should be involved in important discussions and decisions.

## 5. Protection against discrimination

We promote equal rights for all and work towards the elimination of existing disadvantages. We therefore are committed to treating all people with respect and recognition.

In particular, we prohibit any form of discrimination based on:

- racial or ethnic origin (e.g. ancestry, skin colour, language);
- sex;
- religion or belief;
- disability;
- age and
- sexual orientation or gender identity.

The EWDE Executive Board and executives have a special duty to create structures that avoid both direct and indirect discrimination. By *direct* discrimination, we mean rules, behaviours or measures that are explicitly designed to result in unequal treatment and cannot be justified by objective reasons<sup>5</sup>. However, different treatment of certain groups may be permissible in order to compensate them for existing social disadvantages. By *indirect* discrimination, we mean rules or measures that appear to be formulated in a neutral manner, but are in fact discriminatory.

Because of our extensive work with people with disabilities, we feel a special responsibility to respect the diversity of people with their respective talents and limitations, and to overcome barriers and prejudices against them<sup>6</sup>.

## 6. Protection against physical, psychological and sexual exploitation/abuse

Physical, psychological or sexual exploitation and abuse constitute an attack on human dignity.

We therefore are committed to the following rules:

- Never violate other people's privacy through (threatening) inappropriate physical contact or touching, through inappropriate sexual remarks or the showing/display of pornographic depictions.
- Under no circumstances exploit a position of power to obtain sexual services.
- Not trade employment offers or goods for sexual services. Particularly those involved in humanitarian aid undertake not to engage in sexual relations with people from the (potential) target group.
- To treat people with disabilities with particular care so as not to cross physical and psychological boundaries.
- Never to (nor threaten to) humiliate, bully, exploit other people.

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<sup>5</sup> The reasons can be derived from the church's right to self-determination.

<sup>6</sup> See „Declaration of the Conference for Diakonie and Development for an Inclusive Society and the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities“ (available only in German).

## 7. Child protection

Children are persons under 18 years of age. They deserve special protection.

We are committed to complying with the following rules when dealing with children:

- Never to abuse the power conferred upon us by our position or function or our influence regarding the lives and welfare of children.
- Never to beat children or cause them other physical harm.
- Never to support illegal, dangerous, negligent or abusive behaviour towards children; not to use inappropriate, indecent or abusive language.
- Never to help children with intimate tasks that they can carry out alone (such as accompanying them to the toilet, bathing them or changing their clothes) unless requested or necessary.
- Not to build relationships with children that may be considered exploitative or abusive; not to embrace, caress, kiss or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive manner.
- Never to engage in sexual activity with a child or in front of children; never demand from children that they engage in sexual activity or let them be abused by a third person.
- Not to expose children to pornographic material.
- Not to buy, possess, consume or distribute child pornography.
- Not to assign hazardous or exploitative tasks to children; Not to assign any tasks to children that will harm their physical and mental development or prevent them from going to school.
- To respect the dignity and personal rights of children; Private photographs and films cannot be distributed on social media without consent. Before taking pictures, the written consent of the parent or guardian must be obtained.

The EWDE has a child protection strategy that brings together all institutional measures for prevention and case management<sup>7</sup>.

## 8. Preventing and combating corruption

The trust that our supporters and financial donors place in us results in the responsibility and legal obligation to use the funds entrusted to us sparingly and economically for our purposes. Our *Leitlinie Integrität* (“Integrity Policy”) defines the duty to ensure a culture of transparency and accountability. We strive for a position of uncompromising integrity that enables us to act honestly and in strict compliance with all rules and regulations and to fight corruption. Accordingly, we are committed to planning and managing our donations with care.

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<sup>7</sup> See EWDE Child Protection Strategy.

Within the EWDE, as well as in all countries<sup>8</sup> in which the EWDE operates, we therefore are committed to:

- Complying with the law and internal regulations.
- Rejecting any form of corruption, both in dealings with public officials and with private sector individuals.
- Refraining from demanding, accepting, offering, giving or arranging bribes.

These obligations include the prohibition of unlawful payments or non-monetary benefits and the granting of unlawful advantages to public officials, partners or member organisations as well as family members. Furthermore, we do not make “facilitation payments” (cash payments to public officials in order to simplify administrative procedures).

#### **a. Avoiding conflicts of interest**

We avoid situations in which our personal relationships or financial interests<sup>9</sup> may conflict with the interests of the EWDE. Legal transactions with related parties must therefore always be reported to our supervisor in text form<sup>10</sup> (e.g. by fax or email).

This applies to:

- Contracts (e.g. fee agreements, service contracts, consultancy contracts) with related parties.
- Contracts with companies in which related parties have an interest, or over which they have personal or economic influence.
- When hiring or promoting related parties and
- Similar cases where a conflict of interest can be expected.

Related parties in the context of this Code of Conduct are specifically spouses, life partners, siblings, siblings of spouses or life partners as well as direct relatives by blood or by marriage (e.g. parents, parents-in-law, grandparents, children, grandchildren). Unrelated persons may also be a related party where close personal contacts or close economic ties exist. Should we have any doubts as to whether the persons concerned are related parties, we shall inform our supervisor in text form<sup>11</sup>.

Supervisors shall then inform their employees, first verbally, and subsequently also in text form, about the measures to be taken in order to avoid, or at least mitigate, the conflict of interest (e.g. by preventing the person concerned from participating in negotiations).

We shall inform the Human Resources department in text form of any paid secondary employments and will only carry them out if they do not adversely affect our functions as EWDE employees or undermine confidence in the EWDE<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> All employees involved in international programme work at Brot für die Welt are provided with a guide on the prevention of corruption and the handling of suspected cases in projects.

<sup>9</sup> These include, for example, legal transactions, employment relationships, consultancy activities, loans, shares or other economic interdependencies.

<sup>10</sup> See Form for Reporting a Conflict of Interest under Section 8a) of the Code of Conduct; the text form is for documentation purposes and must be kept with the responsible supervisor.

<sup>11</sup> See Form for Reporting a Conflict of Interest under Section 8a) of the Code of Conduct.

<sup>12</sup> For detailed regulation, see Section 3, paragraph 3, 1st sentence collective labour agreement for the public sector.

Members of the Executive Board are subject to extended obligations arising from the *Diakonischer Corporate Governance Kodex* (“Corporate Governance Code of Diakonie”)<sup>13</sup>.

#### **b. Gifts and other benefits**

We undertake not to accept any benefits – in any form whatsoever – which might reasonably be expected to affect the business decisions or transactions of the EWDE or its local partners, contractors and other business partners. Caution should be exercised when receiving or giving gifts and entertainment.

- In principle, we do not accept gifts and other benefits from business partners, project partners and beneficiaries of the EWDE, unless they are customary business gifts<sup>14</sup>, which do not exceed a value of € 35.
- In principle, we reject gifts and other benefits exceeding a value of € 35 with reference to the EWDE Code of Conduct. If there are reasons to assume that the value of € 35 has been exceeded, a clarifying discussion with the supervisor must be sought and must be documented by the supervisor. It is at the discretion of the supervisor to seek advice from the Compliance and Risk Management Staff Unit.
- The supervisor may exceptionally grant written consent to accept gifts and other benefits with a value exceeding € 35 if the acceptance is a matter of courtesy or is in line with normal business practice<sup>15</sup>.
- Monetary gifts may not be accepted under any circumstances.
- We do not use non-monetary gifts for private purposes, but for charitable purposes or for the benefit of other employees (e.g. through a raffle).
- The private use of non-monetary gifts and other benefits (e.g. honorary titles) is only permitted with the written consent of the supervisor and if the reasons have been communicated in writing to the Compliance and Risk Management Staff Unit<sup>16</sup>.
- If we are repeatedly invited to business meals by partners or member organisations, or if the EWDE repeatedly covers the cost of business meals, we seek an advisory discussion with our supervisor.
- Gifts to public officials are not permitted. Exceptions to this require the prior written consent of the Compliance and Risk Management Staff Unit.

We shall also observe the EWDE Travel Policy<sup>17</sup> and Management Guidelines<sup>18</sup>. When gifts are given to employees, the rules governing gifts for service awards/farewells apply<sup>19</sup>. We shall notify our supervisor before any gifts and other benefits are given to external parties<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Corporate Governance Kodex der Diakonie Deutschland (“Corporate Governance Code of Diakonie”, available only in German), 2018.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. flowers, invitations to lunches/dinners.

<sup>15</sup> See Form for Reporting Gifts and Other Benefits under Section 8b) of the Code of Conduct.

<sup>16</sup> See Form for Reporting Gifts and Other Benefits under Section 8b) of the Code of Conduct.

<sup>17</sup> EWDE Travel Policy (“Reiserichtlinie”).

<sup>18</sup> EWDE Management Principles and Signature Rules for Payouts (“Bewirtschaftungsrichtlinie”).

<sup>19</sup> See Executive Board’s resolution dated 5 April 2018.

<sup>20</sup> See Form for Reporting the Giving of Gifts and other Benefits under Section 8b) of the Code of Conduct to External Parties.

### **c. Asset protection**

We use the agency's assets responsibly and protect them against loss, damage, theft or unauthorised use. The agency's assets also include intellectual property rights and business know-how. We defend our work against attempted fraud, regardless of whether such attacks are internal or external.

## **9. Confidentiality and data protection**

We treat trade secrets as strictly confidential. Sensitive information of any kind is neither used for the pursuit of our own interests nor made accessible to third parties. We hereby are committed to ensuring the secure storage of this information by technical means at all times. It is self-evident that compliance with the applicable data protection regulations and the protection of data subject rights is assured. We therefore only collect, store or process personal data if this is necessary for specified, unambiguous and legally permitted purposes.

## **10. Speak up and report**

We cannot always be sure whether a decision is "the right one". In individual cases, decisions may be reviewed against the following key questions:

- Is it in accordance with the law and with the EWDE's internal rules?
- Can I reconcile my decision with my conscience?
- Can my decision be easily communicated to the outside world and will it stand up to an external check?
- Does my decision compromise the reputation of the EWDE?

We should report any suspected violation of the Code of Conduct through the EWDE notification channels (see below). Informants or complainants who articulate incidents or concerns with good intentions need not fear any personal or professional retribution.

Employees should primarily address their questions, potential risks/concerns or complaints to their supervisor.

If you cannot or do not want to contact your immediate supervisor, you can address your potential risks/concerns and complaints to the following channels:

- General – Compliance and Risk Management Staff Unit
- General – External Ombudsperson of the EWDE (who can preserve anonymity, if desired)
- For discrimination and harassment/abuse – EWDE Gender Equality Commissioner and Human Resources Department
- For corruption in projects – Corruption Prevention Team
- For child protection – Child Protection Team: [kindesschutzteam@ewde.de](mailto:kindesschutzteam@ewde.de)
- For data security – Data Protection Officer: [datenschutz@ewde.de](mailto:datenschutz@ewde.de)

The Employee Representative Body (MAV) also offers advice: [mav@ewde.de](mailto:mav@ewde.de)

## 11. Punishment of violations of the Code of Conduct

Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary actions under labour law and, if applicable, charges under criminal law.

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