



# CODE OF CONDUCT

MÉDECINS DU MONDE  
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



# 1.

## INTRODUCTION

### OVERARCHING PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide guidance to all MdM representatives – including but not limited to employees, board directors and trustees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, partners and interns – on the high levels of personal and professional standards and behaviours required while representing the organization.

This Code of Conduct is intended to serve as a guide for all staff detailing how to uphold the ethical foundation of the organization's views and actions and to ensure that they safeguard the communities they work with, and to ensure they are not put at greater risk.

This Code of Conduct provides a framework within which all MdM employees and volunteers, regardless of location, will undertake to discharge their duties and to regulate their conduct, along with the chapter's particular policies and procedures, terms and conditions of employment (as outlined in employment contracts or collective agreements, if applicable), volunteer charters, and any other document framing individuals' engagement with MdM.



## SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

For the purposes of this code of conduct, MdM means any MdM affiliate around the world.

### WHEN THIS CoC APPLIES

At all times, this Code of Conduct sets out the standards and behaviours expected of MdM's representatives. Representation does not end after official work hours. MdM representatives must be mindful of their behaviour outside of their usual work environment, primarily when representing MdM. As such, all employees, and other persons representing MdM, are required to sign this document confirming they have read and understood the Code of Conduct and agree to comply with it at all times.

### WHO THIS CoC APPLIES TO

All representatives of MdM, regardless of location, including but not limited to employees, board directors and trustees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, partners, and interns.

Any conduct and behaviour for which MdM has zero-tolerance constitutes gross misconduct and results typically in immediate dismissal. Each MdM chapter ensures a chapter's grievance and discipline policy is in place detailing specifics on reporting mechanisms and consequences of a breach, as described in this Code of Conduct.

# 2.

## WHO WE ARE

Through innovative health programmes and evidenced-based advocacy, we empower excluded people and communities to claim their right to health while fighting for universal access to healthcare. We are guided by universal humanitarian principles<sup>1</sup> and use a human rights-based approach. Our values and principles are covered in the Cracow Charter (MdM International Network, 1990) and the "Vision, Mission, Values" (MdM International Network, 2016).

<sup>1</sup> These are humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. See the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, proclaimed in Vienna in 1965 by the 20<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

## PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE

MdM's primary objective is to improve access to health and the universal right to health care. MdM believes in the universal right to health. It is committed to assisting all vulnerable populations: victims of natural disasters, famine, disease, victims of armed conflict and political violence, refugees, displaced people, minority groups, and, in general, all those who are excluded from health care.

## DUTY TO BEAR WITNESS

To ensure it can work effectively, MdM must go further than the mere provision of health care by advocating on behalf of the populations for which we work. MdM speaks out where we see limited access to care and failures to respect human rights and dignity.

## POWER DYNAMICS

All MdM representatives hold a privileged position of power and trust. It is essential that all representatives of the organization understand the power differential between themselves and the communities they serve, and to ensure that employees do not exploit such power differentials for their benefit. This Code of Conduct is intended to guide standards of individual behaviour and professionalism to protect MdM representatives from situations that may damage their or MdM's reputation and to ensure employees avoid exploiting unequal power dynamics for their benefit.

Much of the work carried by MdM, as well as the ability to access communities in need, is dependent on the level of trust afforded to the organization. That trust is significantly reliant on all staff and MdM representatives upholding the standards detailed in this Code of Conduct.

## 3. THE CODE OF CONDUCT

### CORE PRINCIPLES

1. All employees and other MdM representatives acknowledge and respect the core humanitarian principles and the universal right to health and commit to protecting that right in all their decisions and actions.
2. MdM recognizes that laws, customs, and cultures can vary from country to country. As an international network, this code of conduct is developed in compliance with international standards and regulations, and it shall be interpreted in such a way that it is compliant with those standards.
3. All human, financial, and other MdM resources shall be used most appropriately and effectively, and for the means for which they were intended.
4. All employees and representatives must report any concern or suspicion they have regarding possible violations of this code of conduct via their MdM chapter's reporting mechanism.
5. Managers and leaders bear a particular responsibility in ensuring these standards are upheld and will take prompt, appropriate action to deal with any breach of this Code of Conduct.
6. This Code of Conduct should be shared with all beneficiaries, partners, and communities with whom MdM is working so that they are empowered to hold MdM accountable to the standards stated in this Code of Conduct.

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

MdM confirms its commitment to respecting the inherent rights, freedom, dignity, and equality of all people. In that regards, we prevent and refuse any form of abuse and exploitation.

We have a specific attention on children and adults in vulnerable situation or where unequal power dynamics exist. Children and adolescents can be extremely vulnerable, especially in poverty, humanitarian crises or conflicts, and deserve higher protection standards.

While MdM's mandate does not pertain specifically to children, MdM's representatives encounter children every day in the course of their work.

In the delivery of this its work, MdM is therefore committed to achieving full implementation [1] across its network of the six core principles adopted in 2019 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).



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**The six (6) core principles of the PSEA policy are as follows:**

1. "Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct.
7. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment."

MdM takes all concerns and complaints brought to their attention regarding sexual exploitation and abuse seriously. MdM initiates an investigation of complaints that indicate a possible violation of the PSEA Policy.

By signing this Code of Conduct, you affirm that you have read, understood and will comply with the full PSEA policy.

# 4. COMMITMENTS

As an MdM representative, I will:

## TREAT ALL PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY

### I WILL

- Respect all persons equally and without any discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political opinion, or disability.
- Treat all persons equally, with respect, dignity, and courtesy.
- Ensure that beneficiaries' needs and rights, as well as their values, beliefs, and traditions, are respected at all times.
- Always seek to protect the rights of the most vulnerable and seek for a "do no harm" approach.
- Make sure that my personal beliefs or opinions do not jeopardize activities or tasks performed on behalf of MdM.
- Dress according to local standards and dress appropriately while representing MdM.
- Maintain the highest standards of professionalism at all times.
- Refrain from seeking or receiving any favour in exchange for any service (for example, in exchange for protection and assistance).
- Ensure that my relationships and behaviour are not exploitative, abusive, or corrupt in any way.
- Discourage any form or kind of harassment, intimidation, exploitation, or abuse, and report any act that I am aware of through my hierarchy or existing mechanisms.
- Report any misconduct, failure, or breach of this Code of Conduct.



### I WILL NOT

- Work under the influence of alcohol or a psychoactive substance on MdM's premises, vehicles, or accommodation.
- Carry any weapon or fake weapon on any MdM premises, or any MdM vehicles, or any place where MdM conducts business as it is strictly prohibited.
- Abuse my position of authority or unequal power dynamics in any way.
- Engage in any form of sexual abuse or exploitation of any persons of any age.

## PERFORM MY DUTIES AND CONDUCT MY PRIVATE LIFE WITH THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

### I WILL

- Declare any financial, personal, or close intimate relationship interest that may impact MdM activities.
- Notify MdM of any intention to seek a nomination or official role and clarify whether any conflict or perceived conflicts that may arise with my duties with MdM.
- Reject monetary or non-monetary gifts from authorities, beneficiaries, donors, suppliers and other persons, which have been offered to me as a result of my employment with MdM. Where the giving and acceptance of gifts is a standard cultural practice, I will ensure that such gifts are within the limits of reasonable judgements and per internal policies.
- Ensure that MdM's assistance is not provided in exchange for any service or favour from others.

### I WILL NOT

- Assist any third party, whether it be a company or a private individual, having any interest with MdM if this might result in preferential treatment and take part in any activity that could lead to a conflict of interest.
- Use my position or affiliation within MdM to engage in personal gain.
- Offer or accept any bribe, and I will report any form of corruption.
- Solicit services of sex workers in the course of my duties for MdM, as well in the premises of MdM, during my travel or in my participation in MdM workshops, meetings or trainings.

## PROTECT MdM RESOURCES AND SENSITIVE INFORMATION

### I WILL

- Respect MdM resources, whether material or intangible.
- Make responsible and appropriate use of MdM information, employee and patient data (including images and stories) and internal reports.
- Obtain the proper authorization (from MdM headquarters) before speaking to the national or international media or in public on behalf of MdM, or before disseminating any publication concerning MdM.
- Abide by MdM's image rights and the right of an individual to have their private life and information protected when photographing, filming, or interviewing.
- Request informed consent from concerned individuals allowing myself, my team, or my field teams to photograph, film, and interview.
- Ensure that the individuals who have their testimony documented by photograph, film or interview understand and agree to MdM using their image and stories for testimonials and outreach and provide all appropriate information to allow them to make an informed decision.
- Ensure testimonies are collected in total and absolute respect of their lives and values and that I will tell their stories as truthfully as they are presented.
- Respect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) relevant to my territory when collecting and using the information through MdM communications channels, always protecting the anonymity of individuals.
- Verify, before usage, the image usage rights, as well as the terms of use, of images and videos provided by colleagues or a chapter and acquire usage rights by paying the appropriate fee, when required.

### I WILL NOT

- Disclose confidential information and will exercise discretion when handling sensitive or personal information.
- Make private use of the premises or any property or asset belonging to MdM, unless specifically authorized.



Date:

Name:

Signature: