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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

PROTECTION POLICY

Vision

The Arab NGO Network for Development envisions the emergence of safe, productive, and democratic societies in the Arab Region working in mutual solidarity, where human dignity, freedoms, and political, economic, social, and cultural rights are preserved within the framework of the rule of law and institutions, and where peace, security, and stability prevail. It believes in societies run through civil governments and by representative democratically elected parliaments, which are characterized by the existence of recognized and institutional participatory mechanisms, enabling civil society forces and citizens to participate effectively in public policy. These societies must be open to other cultures and communities, interacting with them, and committed to international law and the human rights system.

Mission

The Arab NGOs Network for Development is an independent, democratic, civic organization aiming to enhance citizen participation, bolster the role of civil society organizations, and promote the values of democracy and respect of human rights and sustainable human development in the Arab region. ANND is committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, people's dignity and freedoms, respect of diversity, equitable distribution of resources, safeguarding cultural heritage in the region, and implementing the developmental priorities of local communities, in the framework of a fair global order.

Protection Policy

Background

The Arab NGO Network for Development developed this protection policy based on its founding principles, commitment to human rights, and their adaptation in relations between members, workers, and contractors. It has based this on international standards and international and regional best practices for the protection of workers in the NGO sector.

Definitions

Vulnerability

Based on the Core Humanitarian Standards on Quality and Accountability:

«People may be vulnerable because of individual factors such as age (particularly the very young and the very old), disability or illness (e.g., people with mobility problems or people living with HIV and AIDS) or because they are caring for others who are vulnerable. Social and contextual factors also contribute to people's vulnerability. These include discrimination and marginalization (e.g., in

some contexts, the low status and power of women and girls), social isolation (including the lack of access to information), environmental degradation (e.g., soil erosion or deforestation), climate variability, poverty, lack of land tenure, poor governance, ethnicity, class, caste, and religious or political affiliations.»

Harassment

Harassment is behavior that leads to the creation of a work environment that is marred by intimidation, hostility, or pressure. It includes:

- Verbal or non-verbal hints/suggestions or actions or physical or moral abuse.
- Discriminatory behavior based on race, gender, origin, disability, age, or religion.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is an unwanted behavior of a sexual nature. It violates your dignity, makes you feel afraid, weak, or insulted or creates a hostile or abusive environment.

The person concerned does not have to have publicly objected to a person's behavior to be considered unwanted. Sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments and jokes.
- Physical behavior includes unwanted sexual solicitation, touching, and other forms of sexual assault.
- Displaying, publishing, or using photos and drawings of a sexual nature.
- Sending text and emails with sexual content.

Reporting Abuse

Actual and suspected incidents of abuse must be reported immediately or as soon as possible by following ANND's reporting mechanisms.



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MECHANISMS FOR REPORTING & HANDLING COMPLAINTS

To ensure a comfortable working environment and healthy relations among ANND staff and between them and the Administration, all employees, regardless of responsibility, must abide by the ethics of human relations, respect, and professionalism in their behavior in the workplace and during the implementation of tasks. Drawing the limits of acceptable and unacceptable behavior among staff requires a degree of openness and freedom. They must have the collective and fundamental responsibility and common space to express their observations to their colleagues and draw the rules of mutual behavior in the workplace or during the implementation of tasks.

The Mechanisms for Reporting and Handling Complaints related to the code of conduct, the protection policy and the anti-corruption policy, applies to all ANND staff, workers, and consultants in their various capacities and covers full-time workers. However, temporary contractors shall have the right to file complaints exclusive to the content, timeline, and related tasks of the contract with ANND.

Accordingly, the following mechanisms and procedures shall be followed in all matters related to staff and contractor complaints regarding issues covered by ANND's code of conduct, the protection policy and the anti-corruption policy.

Complaints Body

- Complaints shall be received by one person elected for this purpose. In case they are the subject of the complaint, the complainant shall have the right to petition the head of the Staff Union Committee, the Executive Director, or the delegated member of the Coordination Committee.
- A woman staff member shall be elected to receive complaints regarding the abuse or harassment of any ANND employee or contractor during the execution of tasks and activities related to the contract.
- Members of the Union committee are allowed to hold this position upon candidacy and election. However, candidacy is not limited to committee members. Elections are held on an annual basis in parallel with the Staff Union Committee elections.
- The subject of the complaint must be an ANND employee, Executive Director, or heads of departments, in addition to members and members of the Coordination Committee.

Reporting/Complaint Mechanism

Abusive behavior must be reported immediately or as soon as possible to the elected official. In case of delay, the reasons must be clarified. To be accepted, all complaints must be filed no later than one month after the incident.

- The complainant may utilize any form deemed appropriate to inform the officer in charge: verbally, written, electronic communication, or other means. All correspondences shall be confidential (e.g., private email address). The elected officer shall enjoy full immunity regarding disclosure and act in complete secrecy up until the start of the remedial process.
- Launching the remedial process requires written documentation of the complaint and shall not proceed merely based on verbal information. The complaint must include an accurate description of the abuse, its circumstances, time of occurrence, and the accuser's opinion on the complainant.

- Persons filing a complaint shall enjoy full immunity against retaliatory measures by the accused. The Administration or the Coordination Office shall ensure that their rights are protected in this regard.

Review and Remedial Mechanisms

- Once the complaint is received, the elected officer shall immediately meet with the complainant, within a time limit of no more than 48 hours (or upon the complainant's return to ANND headquarters in the event of travel). The officer shall listen to the complaint details, demands, and recommendations for remedial action.
- The officer elected to receive complaints shall assess the gravity of the behavior. If the matter could be treated through direct or indirect communication between the two parties, necessary actions must be taken immediately to solve the issue before considering further procedures. The complainant must agree to this procedure and be satisfied with its results.
- In the event the issue cannot be solved through communication, as illustrated above, the officer has the right to initiate further procedures, including conducting a personal investigation into the matter and interrogating the parties involved (especially the accused). The elected officer shall provide an opinion on the complaint and the behavior of the accused in a written report. They shall suggest what they deem an appropriate solution, taking direct procedures, or submitting the report to the concerned body to take the necessary measures.
- The case shall be closed upon the agreement of the complainant and the accused. If no agreement is reached or if the complaint is referred to the Executive Office or the Coordination Office, both parties shall have the right to present their side before the committee concerned with deciding the procedure.
- Based on the suggestion or recommendation of the complaints officer, appropriate action shall be taken by a committee formed of the Executive Director, the head(s) of concerned departments, the head of the Staff Union Committee (or a representative thereof), and the complaints officer. The committee shall decide on actions and procedures by simple majority, notify the accused, and record the decision in their personnel file.
- In matters of abusive behavior of a grave nature (sexual harassment, physical assault, or similar act) or if related to the Executive Director and heads of departments, the Coordination Office shall be in charge of the proceedings. The Coordination Office shall appoint two of its members to a committee. They shall be joined by the Executive Director if they are not the subject of the complaint or the head of a department). The committee shall also include the head of the Staff Union Committee and the complaints officer. The committee shall decide on actions and procedures by simple majority, notify the accused, and record the decision in their personnel file.
- Decisions shall be taken no later than one month of the start of investigations, in the case of the Executive Office being in charge, and two months in the case of the Coordination Office being in charge.