

Code of Conduct for the staff and Board of The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM

Introduction:

The Code of Conduct regulates the relationship between the Association and its stakeholders (public and private), on both informal and official levels. This code reflects the due diligence of service providers in the organization to implement the best practices in their directives. This Code of Conduct has been developed to document these practices and to ensure that all members of the Association follow these practices, eliminating any previous assumptions or attitudes in this regard.

This code of conduct is based on the principle of the rule of law. Therefore, the Association takes all the necessary measures to comply with the relevant Palestinian legal frameworks, in particular the Palestinian Basic Law, the Palestinian Charitable Associations Law, the Labor Law and the regulations issued by the competent authorities of the Palestinian state, including the Declaration of Independence, and everything related to the realization of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people for freedom and independence.

In addition, as a human rights organization, the Association devotes all necessary efforts to respect international human rights and charters that regulate the relationship of citizens with one another and within governing systems. Therefore, the Association invests the necessary efforts to express these charters in its activities: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN resolutions against discrimination.

Terms and Definitions:

- **The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM**
Founded in 2012 under the Charities and Non-Governmental Organisations Law No. 1 of 2000, REFORM is an independent, secular, non-partisan Palestinian NGO, that strives for a society where everyone has the capacity to participate effectively, individual and collective rights are respected and pluralism is ensured in an independent Palestinian state. REFORM adopts a strategy of sustainably empowering marginalized groups, in particular youth and women from hard-to-reach communities, through establishing safe acting platforms, encouraging community-led development processes and shaping a more inclusive governing system that is responsive to people's needs. In this way, REFORM addresses various social fault lines and enhances the individual and collective abilities of women and youth, contributing to the formation of a fairer society where women and youth take a leading role in public life and governing bodies actively practice needs-based policy making.
- **The Board**
It is a body composed of a number of elected members. The activities of the Board are determined by the powers, duties and responsibilities entrusted to it or assigned to it, including the number of members of the Board, how they are chosen and the mechanism for holding meetings according to the internal procedures.
- **Integrity and Transparency**
Provide reliable and timely information related to the organization's activities, policies and decisions, as well as to facilitate the access of beneficiaries, the public, and official and non-official actor to these processes.
- **Effectiveness and Efficiency**
The organization's operations are effectively reported, including all results related to addressing and meeting the needs of the target groups with the most efficient use of financial and human resources.
- **Conflict of Interest**
The Association has a policy of managing conflicts of interests that may arise and affect the ability of a party or entities to make fair decisions, such as personal gains, gains for his or her family, or other institutions to which he / she is related.
- **Good Governance**
Participatory decision-making processes that transparently reflect the requirements of decision-making and effectively translates the law into its processes, ensuring decision makers are held to account and are framed to discourage corruption.
- **Equality**

Non-discrimination on the basis of gender, color, race, religion or any class or regional cause, and that persons or groups, whether beneficiaries, employees or service providers, shall be treated equally under the umbrella of equal opportunities.

- **Business Records**

Documents, correspondence, financial and administrative work papers, agreements, records and minutes of meetings documented, either paper or electronically.

Definition of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is a set of general values that regulate the relationships within REFORM and with different stakeholders. It is an ethical code that ensures that principles and governing values are upheld amongst its Board of Directors, staff and service providers, in regards to the performance of their functions.

Objectives of the Code of Conduct:

The code of conduct provides the information needed by all parties engaged in the regulatory processes of the Association, in order to effectively carry out their work and ethically implement the policies of the Association. This is a major component of the internal system of the Association (bylaws and statute) and should be read and applied in full, at all levels of the organization. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To provide a moral and ethical framework for the parties within the organizational structure within the Association.
- To define the framework of professional behavior and not leave room for personal judgment.
- To maintain mutual trust between the Association and the target groups and all stakeholders in the regulatory process.
- To ensure that the functions within the Association are efficient and transparent.
- To provide informational frameworks for the employees of the Association.
- To identify and define the role of the Association within its social framework.
- To document and disseminate the principles of the Association.

REFORM's core values:

The values of the organization are considered the driver of the behavior of the parties within the organization's regulatory processes, in regards to their performance:

- **Influence**
Contribute to the improvement of the Palestinian reality through the empowerment of marginalized groups and improving the reality of their partnership in public life.
- **Sustainability**
The Association is committed to ensuring the sustainability of its interventions. Based on the needs of its beneficiaries and building on their skills and talents, REFORM empowers its participants to continue being active beyond the interventions.
- **Ownership (Participatory Approach)**

The institution adopts a participatory approach in its work, and therefore enhancing the capacity of its target audience to own the development processes and interventions it implements is a key pillar in these interventions.

- **Transparency and Accountability**

The Association manages its material resources effectively - as public property - and complies with the relevant legal frameworks. It makes its decisions in a participatory manner responsive to the people's needs. REFORM holds that access to information is an inviolable right for every Palestinian, supporting transparency and accountability throughout society, holding decision makers to account at the various levels.

Commitments of the Association towards the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to both the Board of Directors and all employees of the Association in all their categories of employment whether permanent, temporary, partial, or voluntary.

- Adopting a financial and administrative system and periodically reviewing it, and developing all templates related to the implementation of these regulations, and publishing them on the website of the Association's website.
- The values of integrity and transparency are the cornerstone of the Association's work. Those who apply this code must be a messenger of their values wherever they are found.
- The existence of the Association is intrinsically linked to the representation and defense of the rights of its target audience. It holds its employees and legal actors accountable for any defect found in representing, defending, attempting to exploit, or mistreating the interests of those groups.
- The Association rejects all types of politically conditional funding or funding that is inconsistent with its values.
- The Association offers deep constructive and critical analysis for the better of society, without undermining or criticizing any bodies in particular.
- The Association has ensured its development efforts are in line with the National Develop Plan and efforts.
- The Association cooperates fully with all internal and external evaluators, and does not hesitate to provide support to them in terms of maximizing the results of the various controls.

The Association's Responsibilities towards its Employees:

- Provide a working environment that suits the nature and work of employees and protects their dignity.
- Determine the administrative levels in the Association and the functions of the departments and staff, job descriptions, limits of liability, the relationship between the administrative units in the Association, as well as the supervisory and control frameworks.
- Provide the necessary support to strengthen the loyalty of the employee to the Associations and not to its persons.



- Respect for the right of employees to freedom of association, affiliation and the like, provided that the resources of the institution are not misused or devoted to expressing partisan or other views.
- Adopting clear and specific policies and procedures for the management and distribution of personnel, including the payment of salaries, a clear organizational structure, the basis for promotions, penalties, termination of contracts and their distribution to employees.
- Commitment to maintaining the health and safety of employees, related objective conditions and insurance.
- Contribute to the development and increase the capacity of the work staff either by enabling them to continue their education, or participate in local and international conferences or training courses and workshops in a manner that does not conflict with the interest of work.
- Training and promotion of the Code of Conduct at various levels of employment.
- The Association prevents the use of its property and resources in the service of a particular party, based on special considerations.
- The organization prevents its employees from using any information - obtained by virtue of its job location and which is not published - for personal interests.

Contraction process within REFORM

- The Association prohibits contracting couples or relatives of the first degree, even if the desired service is contracted exclusively.
- The Association announces its recruitment and employment policies, as well as its contracting and procurement procedures.
- The Association prohibits duplication of work for full-time staff.
- The Association shall contract with an independent legal auditor on a periodic basis, based on the approval of the General Assembly.
- Adoption of employment decisions and associated decisions are on the basis of equal opportunities.
- The Association shall be committed to the employment of persons with disabilities at a rate of at least 5%.

The Association's Responsibilities towards its Target Groups

- Adopting policies that guarantee the preservation of citizens' rights to access information in a manner that ensures the privacy of employees in the organization.
- To work without discrimination with all parties related to the Association's mandate and to stand at equal distances from all those dealing with the Association, whether they are service providers, beneficiaries, employees, advanced employees or other categories.
- Dissemination of information in the form of administrative and financial reports to show the disbursements and the extent of achieving the objectives and their alignment with the strategic directions.
- Maintaining the flow of information related to the Association's activities to the Palestinian public.

“It is not about correct decisions, it is about how the decision is being made and implemented [or not].”

- The Association makes its decisions with the active participation of its targeted audience and relevant stakeholders to its mandate.
- The Association adopts a financial and administrative system, which regulates the various procedural processes, levels of decision-making and different responsibilities.
- The Association works to uphold and raise awareness of its principles, mission, values and objectives, as well as its targeted areas covered by its activities.
- The issuance of annual financial and administrative reports, the results of the audit as received from the auditors, and the administrative letter attached thereto are shared on the Association’s website.
- Information in regards to current and future activities of the Association is publicly shared.
- Providing information about partnerships, coalitions and contracting with various parties in Palestine and abroad.

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all while encouraging the target groups to engage in the decision making processes, the Association prohibits its employees from using its resources to carry out any partisan activities. The Association may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in any controversies that are political, racial, religious or ideological in nature.

Therefore:

- It is prohibited to disclose the party affiliation of the employee, and the exercise of any activity that expresses the opinion of his party in the activities of the Association.
- It is prohibited to use the resources of the Association in one way or another to serve a party or a political party.

Forbidden at REFORM

- Acquire any privileges or preferences for membership of the Board except for the campaigns and collective offers of the Association.
- Favoritism and nepotism in recruitment, purchasing and selling.
- Accept gifts from people with interests in the organization, or may influence decision making within the organization, excluding gifts with symbolic values, which do not affect decision-making.
- Making any decisions that violates professional boundaries, based on desires, recommendations or pressure from any party.

Characteristics of REFORM Staff

- The employees of the Association uphold values of integrity and neutrality.
- Engage the target audience in decision-making through direct and indirect means.
- Stand at an equal distance from the target audience (treat them all equally).

- Ensure equality and non-discrimination between people / target groups in any situation.
- Apply gender sensitivity in all activities.
- The staff of the Association shall make the necessary effort and establish different safe spaces for the targeted audiences to express their needs in a manner it deems appropriate.
- Employees of the Association shall not be allowed to exploit the target audience, raise the ceilings of their expectations, or falsify certain facts for personal benefits.
- The employees of the Association must respect the target audience in order to fulfill their duties.
- Communication tools derived from activities are exclusively owned by the Association and may not be used for purposes beyond the specified framework.
- The Association shall consider all statements of attendance and lists of expenses as official documents of the Association, and may not be manipulated, falsified, deleted or increased.
- Employees shall use and maintain the resources available to achieve the objectives of the Association and in the areas allocated to it, and to make every effort to prevent any waste or misuse of the assets or property of the Association.
- Refrain from using the assets of the Association for personal or non-business purposes, and that their use to the harm of others is the personal responsibility of the Association.
- Rationalize expenditures and look for alternative ways to ensure that the job is done at the lowest cost.
- Record expenses incurred by activities accurately.
- Every employee has the responsibility to monitor the performance of the Association, provide feedback at different levels of evaluation, and contribute effectively to decision making, either directly or indirectly.

Absence of violence

The Association shall prevent its employees from participating in any act that conflicts with its vision and mission, such as using words that may cause public concern, causing incitement on the basis of factionalism, participating in acts that are offensive or insulting, or acting outside the framework of the law in such a manner that it obstructs the public's confidence in the Association.

- It is prohibited to possess weapons in the workplace or to participate in any quarrel that threatens the security of society.

Volunteering and Social Activities

“REFORM’s employees are also volunteers.”

The Association encourages volunteer work for its employees and pays particular attention to it as a high-quality community service closely linked to good citizenship and encouraging its employees to join voluntary initiatives, both implemented by the Association and implemented by other organizations. The Association takes on a complementary approach

with official bodies and civil society organizations that work in a similar manner in order to exchange experiences, lessons learned, creative approaches and innovation in support of their vision of development.

The Association assigns those who wish to work in a partner organization or to train in one of the partner organizations, as it deems appropriate, for the purpose of developing it and to contribute to the development of the managing organization.

Attracting Volunteers

The Association opens its doors to trainees and volunteers through a process of coordination with the various decision makers and leaders in the community from educational institutions, community centers, official bodies, public and private sector. This step is part of the Association's social responsibility towards its community and is not to be mistaken for preference in any recruitment processes of the Association.

E - mail system, internet and information security

Confidentiality as a core value

Information technology systems are a key element in the Association's work in order to preserve information and facilitate communication between various stakeholders. Therefore, its use takes the following criteria into account:

- Use the e-mail address that is in the Association's name for all communication purposes.
- Do not change any passwords that belong to the Association without proper approval.
- These channels are used in designated areas to facilitate the function of the service provider.
- Social networking sites are not to be used to offend beliefs, religions, ethnicities, regions, and authorities or to discriminate against others on any of these grounds.

Do No Harm

The working environment of the Association is as follows:

- Free from harassment.
 - Free of aggressive language.
 - Free from insult and humiliation.
 - Smoke-free.
 - Responsive to people with disabilities.
 - It is also an environment that denounces all forms of violence.
- **The Code of Conduct is not considered a contract; it does not grant any labor rights and does not guarantee work for a specified period of time.**
 - Each employee of the Association has the responsibility to act ethically and to follow the Code of Conduct.
 - This code targets the staff and the Board of Directors of the Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM.

- **Confirmation: The Association distributes the Code of Conduct to its employees and conducts training on the Code of Conduct.**

**Preparation:
The REFORM staff and Board of Directors**

