



SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT Center

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SRD Center Mandatory Reporting Policies¹

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the mission and practice of the Sustainable Research and Development Center (“SRD Center”) and principles of international law and codes of conduct, all SRD Center staff, including both international and national, regular full and part time staff, interns, contractors, consultants, and volunteers (“SRD Center staff”), are responsible for promoting fundamental human rights, social justice, human dignity, and respect for the equal rights of men, women, and children. While respecting the dignity and worth of every individual, SRD Center staff must treat all persons without distinction on the basis of an individual’s race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age or disability.

SRD Center staff recognize that certain international standards of behavior must be upheld and that these standards take precedence over local and national cultural practices. SRD Center staff commit that they will: (1) always strive to treat all persons with respect and courtesy in accordance with applicable international and national conventions and standards of behavior; (2) never intentionally commit any act or omission that could result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to the beneficiaries we serve, or to their fellow workers; (3) not condone or intentionally participate in corrupt activities or illegal activities. While respecting and adhering to these broader frameworks of behavior, SRD Center specifically requires that SRD Center staff adhere to the following policies:

2. POLICY AGAINST ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF BENEFICIARIES

The SRD Center and SRD Center staff recognize the unequal power dynamic and the resulting potential for exploitation inherent in our work. The SRD Center and SRD Center staff further recognize that exploitation undermines the credibility of our work and severely damages victims of these exploitive acts and their families and communities.

The SRD Center expects its entire staff to uphold the highest ethical standard of integrity, accountability and transparency in the delivery of goods and services while executing the responsibilities of their position.

¹ Issued: April 18/04.

The SRD Center staff are prohibited from engaging in sexual relationships with beneficiaries.² Sexual activity with children (defined according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as all persons under the age of 18) is strictly prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense. This strict prohibition does not apply where the staff member is legally married to someone under the age of 18.

Given the inherently unequal power dynamics, SRD Center staff should avoid recruiting beneficiaries to work for them in a personal capacity (e.g., as domestic workers) whenever possible, because of the potential and/or perception of abuse or exploitation. This should be strictly adhered to in regards to employing younger children.

An SRD Center staff member must never abuse his/her power or position in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, neither through withholding assistance nor by giving preferential treatment. Requests/demands for payment, privilege or any other benefit, including sexual favors or acts, are strictly prohibited.

SRD Center staff are prohibited from engaging in any forms of intimidating, humiliating, degrading or aggressive behavior towards beneficiaries.

3. POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT OF SRD Center STAFF

The SRD Center has a long-standing policy of ensuring a work environment that is free from all forms of harassment based upon a staff member's race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. Unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, will not be tolerated.

For the purposes of this policy, prohibited harassment includes verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct, perpetrated by a supervisor, co-worker or third party with whom SRD Center does business, that discriminates against an SRD Center staff member because of his/her race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. Examples of such discrimination can generally be separated into two categories: sexual harassment and other prohibited harassment:

a. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

² Different considerations will arise regarding the enforcement of some of these principles for SRD CENTER staff hired from the beneficiary community. While sexual exploitation and abuse and the misuse of humanitarian assistance will always be prohibited, discretion may be used in the application of the principles regarding consensual and proper sexual relationships for this category of worker.

- A staff member's submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of that staff member's employment; or
- A staff member's submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a staff member's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Some examples of what may constitute sexual harassment are: (1) threatening or taking adverse employment actions if sexual favors are not granted, or demanding sexual favors in exchange for favorable or preferential treatment, (2) unwanted remarks of a sexual nature, including those made as a part of any purported humorous conduct (such as off-color jokes), (3) persistent and unwanted sexual flirtations, propositions or requests for sexual favors, (4) unwanted physical touching of any kind, (5) open displays or unsolicited showings of nude or sexually explicit photographs, derogatory or demeaning e-mails, screen savers, posters, cartoons, cards, or graffiti.

b. Other Prohibited Harassment

Other prohibited harassment includes verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct when such conduct is based upon a staff member's race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law, and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with that staff member's work performance and/or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples include: (1) offensive language or materials (such as epithets, slurs, e-mails screen savers or jokes) that have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (2) employment decisions that have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a staff member's work performance.

4. POLICY AGAINST FISCAL IMPROPRIETIES

The SRD Center expects all its staff to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and to ensure their and SRD Center's compliance with all applicable laws and accounting principals. Any accounting fraud or other fiscal impropriety is strictly prohibited.

Some examples of fiscal improprieties include (1) unauthorized or unethical use of SRD Center funds, (2) fraudulent accounting or reporting of expenditures, (3) illegal or unethical fiscal activity (e.g., theft, embezzlement, etc.), (4) improperly gaining or potentially gaining financial benefit from beneficiaries, and/or (5) aiding and abetting another's fiscal impropriety.

A willful failure to report a fiscal impropriety may be construed as aiding and abetting the wrongdoer (see Reporting Violations of These Policies). In addition to disciplinary action and/or termination of employment, fiscal impropriety may result in personal liabilities to the wrongdoer and criminal prosecution.

5. REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF THESE POLICIES

These policies prohibit the above-mentioned abuses from occurring in any SRD Center work environment and apply to all SRD Center staff, all outside contractors contracted by the SRD Center and all third parties directly doing business with the SRD Center. SRD Center staff have the responsibility to report any known, reported or suspected cases of alleged violations of these policies by SRD Center staff, any other humanitarian or development workers, representatives of local or national government, police, military personnel, outside contractors who are associated with the SRD Center, and/or all third parties doing business with the SRD Center. SRD Center staff must report alleged violations immediately to their supervisor, the Management Unit, SRD Center's Director, or SRD Center's direct supervisor for the area in which he/she works. Under no circumstances is any SRD Center staff member required to report the alleged violation to a supervisor whom he/she believes to be involved in the violation.

It is not the responsibility of the reporting member of staff to ascertain whether or not the complaint is true. It is his/her responsibility to report any concern in good faith, via the process outlined herein.

When a report of an alleged violation is made:

SRD Center senior management will conduct a full, fair, prompt and thorough investigation as appropriate under the circumstances. Steps taken will depend upon the nature of the allegation. All SRD Center staff must cooperate fully in the course of any investigation. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation subject to the need to conduct a full and fair investigation.

If the SRD Center determines that a violation of these policies has occurred, prompt remedial action will be taken against the offending person(s), up to and including his/her termination from employment. Additionally, if appropriate, SRD Center management will alert the proper legal authorities as to the violation.

Individuals who report alleged violations of these policies or who are involved in the investigation of a violation of these policies, will not be subject to reprisal or retaliation in any form. Retaliation is regarded as a very serious violation of these policies and should be reported immediately. Retaliation against a complaining party by anyone will result in immediate dismissal.

All SRD Center staff are expected to report instances of violations truthfully and responsibly. SRD Center staff who fail to report allegations that have been brought to their attention or to act on information that they know or should know, will be subject to disciplinary measures. Intentionally false reports of violations of these policies will result in termination from employment.