

# THE WHY Foundation

## Code of Ethics & Conduct

### July 2018

**Title:** Code of Ethics & Conduct

**Author:** THE WHY Foundation

**Date for Renewal:** July 2019

**Geographical Scope:** For all THE WHY Foundation employees, volunteers and representatives

Worldwide, except in countries where the following policy contravenes local legislation. In these cases, local legislation must be followed with guidance from THE WHY Foundation. This document will apply in the event that THE WHY Foundation policy is more stringent than local legislation.

#### **Preface**

As a non-governmental and not-for-profit organization based in Copenhagen, Denmark, THE WHY Foundation recognizes the importance of a Code of Ethics and Conduct in its pursuit to provide free, independent information to communities across the globe. This document lays out guidelines within which THE WHY will operate to ensure all staff and volunteers act with honesty and integrity. It applies to all employees of THE WHY and affiliated partner organizations, regardless of rank or status.

THE WHY Code of Ethics and Conduct is adapted from Code of Ethics & Conduct for NGOs as written by the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO) in 2004.

## **I. Guiding Principles**

- a) THE WHY shall emphasize responsibility, service, and public mindedness in its work. Employees shall uphold the reputation and dignity of the organization by carrying out their professional duties responsibly.
- b) THE WHY shall strive to collaborate with organizations beyond borders of politics, religion, culture, race and ethnicity, within the limits of the organizing documents and with organizations and individuals that share common values and objectives.
- c) THE WHY shall be sensitive to the moral values, religion, customs, traditions, and culture of the communities they serve, while advocating for the right to accessible, factual media.
- d) THE WHY shall not violate any person's fundamental human rights and religious freedoms, with which each person is endowed.

## **II. Integrity and Legality**

- a) THE WHY shall strive for openness and honesty internally and toward donors and members of the public. As such, there shall be transparency and accountability in all cases except for personnel matters and proprietary information.
- b) THE WHY shall meet all of the legal obligations in Denmark and will respect the laws of the countries in which it practices.
- c) THE WHY shall provide accurate and timely information about the organization to donors, members, clients, staff, and the general public.
- d) THE WHY shall maintain the confidentiality of personal information on staff, clients and others, unless the individuals waive this right, or disclosure is required by law.
- e) THE WHY shall be strongly opposed to, and not be a willing partner to, corruption, bribery and other financial improprieties or illegalities, and will avoid potential or actual conflicts of interest.
- f) THE WHY shall have a policy for staff and volunteers to confidentially bring evidence of misconduct of anyone associated with the organization, and will take prompt corrective action whenever wrongdoing is discovered.

## **III. Finances, Organization & Collaboration**

- a) THE WHY shall ensure truthful, accountable and effective use of grants, charitable contributions and other funds.
- b) THE WHY shall only seek and accept funding that is consistent with its mission and does not compromise its core principles.
- c) THE WHY is a not-for-profit organization. Any surplus that is generated through its operations is to be utilized solely to help the organization fulfill its mission and objectives.
- d) THE WHY shall be independent and self-governing. It and its policies, vision and activities shall not be dictated by any other organization (included but not limited to any for-profit corporation, donor, government, government official or political party).
- e) THE WHY shall partner with other organizations with similar missions, values and target groups when it would be advantageous for the common target groups and for the achievement of common, mutually beneficial objectives.

- f) THE WHY shall network with other organizations when as a means for promoting growth, effectiveness and efficiency in the independent information sector and its ability to advance the public good.