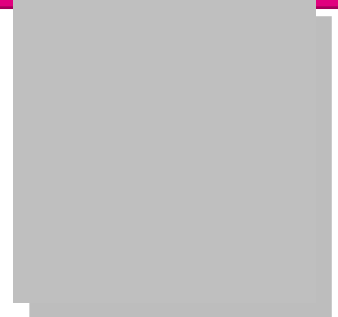


# SF ETHICAL GUIDELINES



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## Introduction

Strømme Foundation's (SF's) Ethical Guidelines apply to all SF staff and persons representing SF, both during working hours and in other situations where the person may be considered a representative of SF. The guidelines apply to staff of SF at Head Office and Regional Office levels, trainees, volunteers, partner and project staff, and other representatives of SF. SF's Ethical Guidelines are intended to uphold the ethical values and standards of the organisation, and protect the communities in which we work from harm.

These guidelines are binding, and failure to comply with the standards outlined in the document can lead to disciplinary action, dismissal and even legal action. Every employee and person representing SF has a duty to report breaches of the Ethical Guidelines through SF's established reporting mechanisms

## 1. Vision

Strømme Foundation's vision is a world without poverty. The fundamental values of the organisation are *human dignity, justice* and *solidarity*. Our vision and values must be reflected in our employees' work and conduct both inside and outside the organisation.

## 2. National Laws and Rights

Employees and those representing Strømme Foundation must respect and abide by the law in all countries in which the organisation operates, and act in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related Conventions. If there is disparity between the law of a country and the human rights, human rights will take priority. However, discretion must be exercised in such cases and actions should, whenever possible, be carried out in agreement with partner organisations and other institutions with high knowledge of the country's laws, culture and human rights situation.

## 3. Respect

Employees in Strømme Foundation must treat all people with respect. They must show respect and understanding for the local context and culture, political system, religion and traditions where they are present. There will be cases where we see that culture, political system, religion and/or traditions conflict with certain human rights, as these have been outlined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Goals or sub-goals in a project may conflict directly with a local tradition, for example in cultures that practice female circumcision or political systems that discriminate against women. When working to strengthen the respect for human rights and promote our vision and values in such societies, it is important to act wisely and with sensitivity. Employees in the Strømme Foundation and SF's partners with close affiliation to the country and culture in question should, wherever possible, help influence the approach and procedure in such cases.

As SF and our partner organisations are working with people in vulnerable situations it is of special importance that staff or SF representatives always treat people with respect and dignity during project visits. When information is gathered through interviews and photos for donor reports, for articles in SF's magazine, external media and fundraising material, SF follows the principle of informed consent; the people interviewed or taken pictures of should always be made aware of and approve the intended use of the information.

Children are the most vulnerable individuals in our projects and SF has developed a Child Protection Policy to ensure that all children in all SFs interventions are protected from all forms of harm. For issues related to children, please refer to the Child Protection Policy. All SF and partner staff working directly and indirectly with children must sign a statement of commitment to this policy upon employment.

#### **4. Discrimination**

Strømme Foundation does not tolerate any form of discrimination by its employees. All people must be treated equally regardless of ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or political affiliation. Leaders / Managers have a special responsibility for ensuring that discrimination does not take place within the organisation and our programmes.

#### **5. Corruption, Impartiality and Nepotism**

Strømme Foundation does not tolerate any form of corruption. SF has developed an Anti-Corruption Policy and Procedures, which all employees are expected to know and adhere to. Employees must not receive gifts or other benefits from anyone as a result of their work in Strømme Foundation. Symbolic gifts of little material value may be received, where this clearly concerns a gesture of politeness and it would be regarded as being disrespectful not to receive the gift.

As a general rule, employees must not have financial interests in businesses that co-operate with Strømme Foundation. Employees in Strømme Foundation must avoid getting into situations where there is a conflict between SF's interests and personal interests. If you are in doubt about whether impartiality, gifts you receive or financial interests are in conflict with Strømme Foundation's Ethical Guidelines, you must always confer with your immediate superior.

Unfair favouring shown to relatives or personal relationships at the expense of others is not accepted in Strømme Foundation.

Sometimes SF staff or others representing SF will develop personal relations with beneficiaries, project staff or others involved in the implementation of SF's programmes, and want to give gifts to these individuals. Giving personal gifts to individuals or families may have the best intentions, but can also cause harm in the project environment, as it may lead to envy and conflicts. Especially SF representatives from Norway, who are comparatively much richer than the people they meet in the projects, should be aware of these social dynamics, and seek advice from Regional Offices if in doubt. For Norwegian Act Now students, the presentation of gifts to individuals or families within the project context should always be clarified with the responsible staff at Hald International Center.

#### **6. Sexual Harassment**

No sexual assault, exploitation or harassment in any form will be tolerated. SF follows the United Nations definition of sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another. Sexual harassment may occur when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. Sexual harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and/or coercive.

Both male and female colleagues can either be the victim or offender. Sexual harassment may also occur outside the workplace and/or outside working hours.

Strømme Foundation does not tolerate that SF or partner staff has sexual relationships with beneficiaries. Regardless of circumstances, sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries can be a misuse of power and exploitation of people in difficult situations. This undermines SF's integrity among the target group and is prohibited.

Strømme Foundation has a zero tolerance policy with regard to exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. It is forbidden to use Strømme Foundation's computers or other technical equipment to view, download or distribute pornography.

### **Examples of sexual harassment**

Sexual Harassment may take many forms including but not limited to:

- Verbal conduct such as nicknames, derogatory comments, slurs, unwanted sexual advances, invitations, comments or conversation.
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings, gestures or sexually inviting stares.
- Physical conduct such as an attack, uninvited affectionate touching of colleagues.
- Use of the Internet and email system to transmit, communicate or receive sexually-suggestive, pornographic or sexually explicit pictures, messages or material. Other communications may also include telephone calls, letters, gifts, emails and telephone texts.

### **Method of Reporting Harassment**

Any incident of harassment must be immediately reported to the supervisor or the Regional Director or other management representative. Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. All reports will be promptly investigated with due regard for the privacy of everyone involved.

### **Representation and protection of Victims**

A complainant or the alleged harasser may be accompanied by a friend or colleague, or be represented during the investigation and hearing of sexual harassment complaint.

The complainant or alleged harasser shall not be required to repeat or recount the events of sexual abuse except where they feel comfortable to do so before a disciplinary hearing.

Where it is necessary to involve a witness, the authority or committee handling the case shall maintain strict confidentiality free of victimization.

Any person handling any complaint of sexual harassment and any party to the complaint shall treat the complaint with confidentiality.

## **7. Alcohol and Intoxicants**

Employees in Strømme Foundation must not drink alcohol or use other intoxicating substances during working hours. Exceptions shall be clarified with immediate superior. During off-duty time on business trips, staff and SF representatives must exercise caution with regard to drinking alcohol and use of intoxicants. The laws of the country visited must always be respected. If the country visited has a more liberal legislation with regard to legal blood alcohol limits for driving ( 0,02 % blood

alcohol content) and use of intoxicating substances than the Norwegian law, SF employees must follow Norwegian law.

## **8. Transparency and public information**

All processes and decisions in Strømme Foundation must be open and transparent. Everything an employee does in his or her work must be transparent and verifiable for colleagues and others that Strømme Foundation chooses to involve in its work.

The Secretary General and the Communications Director are the main spokespersons of Strømme Foundation and should normally be consulted when staff members are contacted by media. If other staff members speak to journalists on behalf of Strømme Foundation, it can only happen after prior agreement with SF's Media Advisor.

Social media provide us with great possibilities for sharing information that promotes SF's mission and vision. However, it is also a challenging arena, as it can be difficult for staff who use a social media profile for both work and private matters, to draw the line between themselves as private persons and as SF employees. SF employees should never publish posts or pictures that conflict with SF's views or values. Special care needs to be taken in commenting on issues and thematic areas that directly or indirectly affect SF's activity. SF staff is expected to exercise sensitivity by not harming SF's reputation, neither through their activities on social media, nor in the public sphere in general.

## **9. Whistle-Blowing Policy**

As employees of the Strømme Foundation, all staff members have a clear responsibility to act constructively and immediately when conduct that breaches with SF's Ethical Guidelines comes to our attention. An employee in Strømme Foundation must notify his or her superior if he or she knows or has a qualified suspicion of failings in the organization. Deviations or a breach of SF's Ethical Guidelines can be reported through SF's webpage, where a form for reporting deviations is available in English, French, Spanish or Norwegian. If the immediate superior is or may be a part of the problem being reported, you must notify the HR Responsible. In special cases you may also report to the Secretary General or Chairman of the Board. No one will be subject to negative sanctions as a result of reporting, and the whistle blower must never be forced to confront the person(s) that he or she has reported. When a matter has been reported, the management takes over responsibility for it.

## **10. Exceptions**

Situations may arise where an employee, following a general assessment, finds that breaches of Strømme Foundation's Ethical Guidelines is required in order to promote Strømme Foundation's vision, or to ensure own or other people's health and safety. If such a situation arises, you must, as a general rule, confer with at least one other employee, preferably a supervisor, and together prepare and sign a report that is submitted to Strømme Foundation's management. In extreme situations in the field, one may have to breach the ethical guidelines to save lives and will have to make a personal judgement without conferring with others. Such situations will be thoroughly investigated and considered in a holistic manner based on SF's vision and mission. Please also consult SF's Security Guidelines or Crisis Management Plan for more information about SF's approach to security in our intervention countries.

## **11. Knowledge of Guidelines**

All employees in Strømme Foundation and partner staff implementing SF programmes must be made familiar with Strømme Foundation's Ethical Guidelines. Strømme Foundation's Ethical Guidelines must be presented to all new employees, and as an attachment to the partnership contract when SF starts new partnerships. SF's Ethical Guidelines must be available on the intranet, in the languages necessary so that all employees can understand its contents. All employees are obliged to familiarise themselves with and follow the Ethical Guidelines.

## **12. Breach of Guidelines**

In case of suspected breaches of the Ethical Guidelines, the employee must be given a written warning and the possibility to respond to the allegations. Repeated breaches of the SF's Ethical Guidelines may result in the termination of employment or the termination of partnership contracts with the partner in question. Deliberate corruption, violation of laws and human rights, purchase of sexual services and sexual relationships with beneficiaries may result in direct termination of employment. Any potential termination of employment will be presented to the Board of Directors by the Secretary General or the HR Responsible, and the Board of Directors will make the final decision on the matter.