

RET International - Code of Conduct

Please be certain that this Code of Conduct is always read, administered, and reviewed in conjunction with the RET's PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) Action Plan.

All employees of the RET are contractually and ethically bound by this code and are required to sign this document per their contractual Terms of Employment. RET Policies & Procedures are detailed in the RET Employee Manual which is the reference for prevention and response to any allegations regarding possible misconduct. Please also note that the RET is a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) since 2003. The RET has furthermore added the paragraphs 13 and 14 to ensure Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

1. The Humanitarian imperative comes first.

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all human beings.

2. The RET will respect the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and non-discrimination in the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. In humanitarian and development assistance, priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.

We will show respect for all persons equally without distinction whatsoever of age, race, gender, religion, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, marital status, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, disability, political conviction, or any other distinguishing feature. We will strive to remove all barriers to equality.

3. Humanitarian and development assistance shall not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.

4. We will endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.

We therefore formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government, only exception should it coincide with our own independent policy.

5. We will respect culture and custom.

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

6. We will always attempt to build response mechanisms to crisis and disasters based on local capacities.

Wherever possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local partners in planning and implementation, and co-operate with local government structures where appropriate.

7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of effective humanitarian and development assistance.

Effective humanitarian and development assistance and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programmes.

8. Humanitarian and development assistance must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to violence, conflict and disaster as well as meeting basic needs.

9. We will hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.

All our dealings with beneficiaries and donors shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency.

10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we will recognise victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

11. We, the RET, will actively promote adherence to the principles of international refugee law, international human rights law and international

humanitarian law. We will be guided by the core values of the United Nations system, including professionalism, integrity and respect for diversity, and will maintain an international perspective at all times.

12. We will respect the dignity and worth of every individual. Additionally, when working with children and women, we will pay particular attention to the specific challenges they face and possible vulnerabilities. We will promote and practice understanding, respect, compassion, and empathy, and will demonstrate discretion and maintain confidentiality as required. We will aim to build constructive and respectful working relations with our humanitarian partners, will continuously seek to improve our performance, and will foster a climate that encourages learning, supports positive change, and applies the lessons learned from our experience.

13. We will not use language or behaviour that is not appropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or culturally inappropriate. As an example, when working with children or any vulnerable, marginalised group, ethnicity or race, we will ensure safety and protection from abuse for all involved in the projects. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

14. In addition, in order to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, the following six core principles established by the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse are incorporated into our Code of Conduct:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are, therefore, grounds for termination of employment;
- Any form of sexual activity or acts with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense;
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently un-equal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency

or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms (see RET's PSEA Action Plan).

- Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

15. Moreover, anyone who works for or on behalf of the RET shall make sure to remain polite, friendly and to respect the personality of the persons they work with and refrain from any kind of moral harassment. Shall be considered as moral harassment any behaviour that may be damaging to the personality of a colleague, a superior, a subordinate or beneficiaries, as well as any kind of "mobbing". The term "mobbing" designates any series of hostile behaviours or allegations, frequently repeated during a period of time, by which one would manage to isolate or exclude a person from his/her place of work. Moral harassment may lead to the termination of the harasser's labour contract.

Zeynep Gündüz

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Zeynep Gündüz', written in a cursive style.

CEO & Executive Director