
INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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PREAMBLE

At Kuwonku, we believe that cooperation and social action are legitimate only when they rest on respect for human dignity, integrity in decision-making, and the responsible use of the resources that society entrusts to our mission.

This Code of Ethics and Conduct sets out the principles, responsibilities, and standards of behavior that guide how we act. It is more than a statement of values: it is a shared reference for our decisions, our relationships, and our responsibility toward the people and communities we work with, as well as toward those who collaborate with Kuwonku, place their trust in it, or contribute resources to it.

Our responsibility is especially important when we work in contexts marked by inequalities in resources, opportunities, or decision-making power. We are aware of these differences and accordingly undertake the commitments set out in the articles that follow.

TITLE I

General provisions

ARTICLE 1

Purpose

1. This Code of Ethics and Conduct (hereinafter, “the Code”) sets out the principles, responsibilities, and standards of behavior that guide the conduct of Kuwonku.
2. The Code is the organization’s ethical frame of reference. Its purpose is to establish a common framework of conduct, guide decision-making, and provide mechanisms to identify and respond to actions that depart from its principles.

ARTICLE 2

Scope

1. The Code applies to all persons who act on behalf of Kuwonku or who participate directly in carrying out its activities (hereinafter, “persons subject to the Code”).

2. Persons subject to the Code shall be familiar with its principles and act consistently with them.

ARTICLE 3**Partner entities**

1. Kuwonku expects the organizations, professionals, and entities with which it collaborates to maintain standards of conduct compatible with the essential principles of the Code.
2. Where the nature of the relationship so requires, these commitments shall be reflected in the corresponding agreements, contracts, or collaboration instruments.

ARTICLE 4**Primacy of principles**

1. Achieving the organization's objectives may never justify conduct contrary to the law, to the dignity and rights of individuals, or to the principles set out in the Code.
2. Operational difficulties, pressure to achieve results, or the particular features of the contexts in which we work may not be used to lower standards of integrity.
3. In contexts marked by inequalities in resources, opportunities, or decision-making power, persons subject to the Code shall act with professionalism, prudence, and respect, paying attention to the consequences their decisions may have for individuals and communities.

**TITLE II****Dignity and respect for people****ARTICLE 5****Human dignity**

1. Human dignity is a fundamental principle of Kuwonku's work.

2. Every person with whom Kuwonku interacts has the right to be treated with respect and professionalism.
3. The following are considered incompatible with the organization's values:
 - a) discriminatory conduct contrary to applicable law;
 - b) intimidation;
 - c) humiliation;
 - d) abuse of authority;
 - e) exploitation;
 - f) any other conduct that undermines a person's dignity.

ARTICLE 6**Relationship with communities**

1. Working in cooperation does not place Kuwonku or its representatives in a position of superiority.
2. The people and communities with which Kuwonku works are rights holders and agents of their own development, not merely recipients of its activities.
3. Kuwonku shall endeavor to ensure that its interventions recognize the capacities, knowledge, and context of people and communities and, wherever appropriate, encourage their participation in matters that directly affect them.

**TITLE III****Integrity and conflicts of interest****ARTICLE 7****Duty of integrity**

1. Integrity requires acting honestly even when a decision is not expressly covered by a rule or procedure.
2. Those acting on behalf of Kuwonku shall place the legitimate interests of the organization and its projects above any personal benefit.

3. Decisions concerning people, funding, contracting, suppliers, partner organizations, resource allocation, or project implementation shall be based on objective and professional criteria consistent with the organization's mission.

ARTICLE 8

Improper use of position

No person may use their relationship with Kuwonku, their institutional position, or information obtained in the course of their duties to improperly obtain financial, professional, or personal advantages for themselves or for third parties.

ARTICLE 9

Independence of judgment

Kuwonku shall endeavor to preserve its independence of judgment. Accepting funding, partnerships, or external collaborations shall be compatible with its mission and shall not unduly compromise its ability to act responsibly and autonomously.

ARTICLE 10

Conflicts of interest

1. A potential conflict of interest exists when personal, family, financial, or professional interests may affect, or may reasonably appear to affect, the impartiality with which a person carries out their responsibilities.
2. A potential conflict does not necessarily mean that any wrongdoing has occurred. The risk arises mainly when the conflict is concealed or not properly managed.
3. Any person facing a circumstance that could compromise their independence of judgment shall disclose it through the established channels and, where appropriate, refrain from taking part in the decision.
4. This obligation shall be observed with particular care in:
 - a) contracting and staff recruitment processes;
 - b) the procurement of goods and services;
 - c) the selection of suppliers or collaborators;
 - d) the allocation of resources;
 - e) financial relationships with organizations or individuals with whom there are prior ties.

5. Transparency in these situations protects both Kuwonku and the person concerned.

IV

TITLE IV

Resource management and fraud prevention

ARTICLE 11

Responsible management of resources

1. The resources managed by Kuwonku have been entrusted to it for a specific purpose, which entails a duty of responsibility, traceability, and accountability.
2. Funds, property, equipment, and other institutional resources shall be used exclusively for legitimate and authorized purposes, in accordance with established management and control procedures.
3. The availability of budget does not in itself justify an expense. Every expense shall:
 - a) meet a genuine need;
 - b) be reasonable;
 - c) be duly authorized;
 - d) be justifiable under the applicable conditions.
4. Misappropriation of resources, falsification of documents or supporting records, knowing manipulation of financial information, and any deliberately irregular use of funds or property are incompatible with the Code.
5. The same standard of responsibility shall apply, within the scope of Kuwonku's responsibilities, to resources transferred to partner organizations or third parties.

ARTICLE 12

Prevention of fraud and corruption

1. Kuwonku rejects fraud, corruption, and any practice intended to obtain or grant an undue advantage.
2. No person acting on behalf of the organization may offer, promise, give, request, or accept benefits intended to improperly influence a decision or to obtain unjustified treatment for Kuwonku, for themselves, or for third parties.

3. Relationships with suppliers, partners, funders, public authorities, and other entities shall be based on legitimate, objective, and transparent criteria. Personal relationships, favors, or private interests shall not influence decisions made on behalf of the organization.
4. Any reasonable indication of fraud, corruption, or misuse of resources shall be handled seriously and independently. The position or level of responsibility of those involved shall not prevent a proper examination of the facts.

V

TITLE V

Relationships with partner organizations

ARTICLE 13

Principles of partnership

Kuwonku shall endeavor to maintain relationships with its partner organizations based on mutual respect, clearly defined responsibilities, fulfillment of commitments, and transparency in the use of resources.

ARTICLE 14

Monitoring of delegated activities

1. Delegating the implementation of an activity does not release Kuwonku from its responsibility to carry out appropriate monitoring.
2. When Kuwonku funds or takes part in initiatives managed by third parties, it shall establish monitoring mechanisms proportionate to the nature of the project, the resources involved, and the existing risks.

ARTICLE 15

Balanced cooperation

Accountability shall be compatible with balanced cooperative relationships. Kuwonku shall endeavor to avoid practices that disproportionately shift risks or administrative burdens onto local organizations without their adequate participation in decisions affecting the implementation of interventions.

VI

TITLE VI

Information and communication

ARTICLE 16

Confidentiality

1. Access to information about individuals, communities, organizations, funders, or Kuwonku itself carries a responsibility.
2. Confidential information shall be used only for the professional or institutional purposes for which it was obtained. Those with access to it shall take the necessary precautions to prevent its unauthorized use, disclosure, or access.
3. Information obtained through a professional relationship with Kuwonku may not be used to obtain personal advantage, even after that relationship has ended, where confidentiality obligations continue to apply.

ARTICLE 17

Protection of personal data

1. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with applicable law and with the policies and procedures established by Kuwonku.
2. This obligation is particularly relevant where disclosure of certain information could create risks or negative consequences for the individuals or communities concerned.

ARTICLE 18

Accuracy of institutional information

1. Institutional information about Kuwonku's projects, resources, and results shall be presented clearly and, to the appropriate extent, on the basis of verifiable information.
2. The following are not acceptable:
 - a) deliberately exaggerating the scope or impact of an intervention;
 - b) presenting planned objectives as achieved results;
 - c) withholding essential information in order to create a misleading impression;
 - d) using testimonies and images in a manner incompatible with the dignity of the people portrayed.

3. Transparency is part of Kuwonku's institutional responsibility and includes both explaining its results and acknowledging the difficulties, limitations, and lessons learned inherent in its work.

ARTICLE 19**Use of images, testimonies, and stories**

1. Images, testimonies, and stories used to explain Kuwonku's work shall preserve the dignity of the people portrayed and comply with the applicable conditions of consent, privacy, and protection.
2. The need to raise awareness, inform, or secure funding shall never justify a degrading, manipulative, or needlessly stereotyped portrayal of the people and communities with whom Kuwonku works.

VII**TITLE VII****Integrity channel****ARTICLE 20****Integrity channel**

1. Kuwonku has an institutional channel, available at integridad@ongkuwonku.org, to receive inquiries related to the Code and good-faith reports of possible conduct contrary to its principles, internal policies, or applicable law.
2. The channel may be used, in particular, to report:
 - a) possible fraud or corruption;
 - b) undisclosed conflicts of interest;
 - c) misuse of resources;
 - d) significant irregularities;
 - e) serious breaches of institutional rules;
 - f) retaliation;
 - g) other situations that may compromise the integrity of Kuwonku, its projects, or the people it works with.

3. The channel may also be used to seek guidance when there is doubt about the appropriate course of action on an ethical matter.

ARTICLE 21**Handling of reports**

1. Reports received shall be handled seriously, impartially, and with due confidentiality.
2. Knowledge of the information shall be limited to those whose involvement is necessary to assess the facts and determine the appropriate course of action.

ARTICLE 22**Prohibition of retaliation**

Kuwonku shall not tolerate retaliation against any person for making an inquiry, raising a concern, or reporting facts they reasonably believe to be irregular, in good faith.

ARTICLE 23**Safeguards and responsible use of the channel**

1. The protection provided for in the preceding article shall coexist with respect for the rights and safeguards of the persons concerned.
2. A report does not in itself constitute proof of the facts reported, nor does it establish any liability.
3. The channel shall be used responsibly. Deliberately false accusations or accusations made in bad faith are contrary to the principles of the Code.

VIII**TITLE VIII****Application of the Code****ARTICLE 24****Duty to lead by example**

1. Those with governance, management, coordination, or supervisory responsibilities have a special duty to lead by example and shall actively contribute to building a culture of integrity.

2. This duty entails fostering a professional environment in which it is possible to raise questions, challenge decisions responsibly, and report possible irregularities without fear of retaliation.

ARTICLE 25

Responsibility of the organization

1. Kuwonku acknowledges its obligation to create the conditions necessary for the principles of the Code to be upheld in practice. To this end, it shall progressively put in place appropriate mechanisms for prevention, information, responsible resource management, oversight, disclosure of conflicts of interest, and handling of possible irregularities.
2. Kuwonku shall make the Code known and promote its principles as an integral part of the organization's culture and practices.
3. The Code does not replace adequate governance and management systems, nor can it by itself prevent every breach.

ARTICLE 26

Review of possible breaches

1. When Kuwonku becomes aware of facts that may constitute a breach of the Code, it shall review them with the necessary diligence, objectivity, and proportionality, respecting confidentiality, the rights of the persons concerned, and applicable law.
2. Every review process shall respect the principle of impartiality and avoid drawing premature conclusions about the persons concerned.
3. No position, level of responsibility, seniority, or relationship with the organization shall in itself be grounds for excluding a possible breach from review.

ARTICLE 27

Measures

Where the facts are established, the appropriate measures shall be taken in light of their nature and seriousness, the responsibilities involved, and the legal or institutional relationship of the persons or entities concerned.



FINAL PROVISIONS

Review and entry into force

FIRST FINAL PROVISION

Review

Kuwonku shall periodically review the Code and its implementation mechanisms to ensure that it continues to respond adequately to the organization's circumstances, risks, and responsibilities, taking into account its development, experience gained in projects, the contexts in which it works, and applicable legal obligations.

SECOND FINAL PROVISION

Entry into force

The Code shall enter into force upon its formal approval by the competent body.