



Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

1.1 Vision and Mission Statement

Vision: to mobilize the marginalized – especially children and women – to build just, equal, and inclusive communities.

Mission: To empower the marginalized – especially women and children – with education, ultimately making it possible for them to become leaders, engaged in local governance and in building inclusive, equitable communities.

1.2 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

To meet our objectives, mission, and core values, Global Concerns India (*hereafter called GCI*) must retain a reputation as an NGO of integrity and respect. When working with GCI, or representing GCI as a board member, member, or volunteer, you represent GCI in your work and life. This Code of Conduct seeks to safeguard our standards of behaviour. The Code of Conduct has been developed to help you understand how important it is to maintain professional practices and an ethical lifestyle. However, the Code of Conduct cannot anticipate every possible situation. If you have any concerns, please discuss with GCI leadership.

1.3 Who is Bound by the Code of Conduct?

The code will be binding upon all those who work in or visit a GCI Program Area and upon all those who represent GCI. This is regardless of whether you have signed an employment contract or not. This means that it applies to all:

- GCI members of the board, mentors, volunteer staff, and volunteers
- Consultants and others undertaking short or long-term assignments or visits for GCI
- Interns, volunteers, instructors, and consultants representing GCI

For convenience, all such persons are referred to as “signatory” in this text. Each signatory is required to be knowledgeable about the Code of Conduct and all related policies and internal controls that are applicable.

1.4 Revision of the Code of Conduct

This is a living document intended to reflect our changing needs and requirements, realities, and responsibilities. As new issues arise, the Code will be periodically reviewed and modified to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs and realities of the organisation.

Any changes in the Code of Conduct will be legally binding for all existing signatories now that the updated document has been communicated.

2. The Codes of Behaviour

2.1 General Values

GCI applies human rights values and principles through promoting participation, accountability, and non-discrimination as much in its internal procedures as in its programming activities. Signatories of the Code of Conduct shall carry out their duties in accordance with these principles, with the highest standard of professional responsibility and integrity. The signatories shall always treat others with respect and dignity.

2.2 Representation

Signatories must remember that they are always representing the organisation and should therefore not indulge in behaviour that may compromise the integrity or professionalism of the organisation.

No signatory will use alcohol or drugs, as this may impact on the quality of their work, image of the organisation, or security situation.

2.3 Respecting laws and culture of the country

Signatories are obliged to familiarize themselves with and respect the laws of the country in which they are working.

Signatories are required to familiarize themselves with and respect local culture, structures, beliefs, and customs, abide the local/national laws and not be in contradiction with international humanitarian law.

2.4 Child Safety Policy

GCI maintains a ‘zero-tolerance to violence’ policy which includes violence toward any GCI staff member, representative, partner, or beneficiary of any age.

In reference to child protection, adult-child relations, and peer relations the following behaviour is NOT permitted by GCI:

- Sexism, racism, or religious discrimination.
- Showing preferential treatment to some children to the detriment or exclusion of others.
- Shouting and bullying of children, which includes using language with children or offering advice which is offensive, abusive, or threatening in any way.
- Intentionally physically or verbally intimidating children and/or preventing a child from expressing his/her opinion.
- Hitting or any form of physical abuse of children.
- Physically restraining children during program activities or at any other time unless the staff member has had appropriate training and another responsible adult is present as a witness.
- Assisting children with tasks of a personal nature which are not part of their job description and/or which the child is capable of fulfilling themselves.
- Allowing a child or young person with whom you work to stay overnight in your house and/or to sleep in the same bed.
- Spending time alone/unsupervised with a child or young person with whom you work. Whenever possible and practical, two adults should be present during workshops and other children's activities. Where this is not possible staff should seek alternatives such as the presence of adult community members and/or use of open spaces that are visible to others in the area.
- Developing physical or sexual relationships with children.
- Developing relationships of an inappropriate nature with children, which could in any way be deemed abusive or exploitative.
- Displaying general behaviour which is against good practice or is potentially abusive, including behaviour by means of ICT, like mobile phone and internet.
- Due to the inherent imbalance of power, Basis does not permit personal relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries.

All signatories have a duty to report suspected or confirmed breaches of the Child Safety Policy to GCI head office or to the designated alternate if no one is available at the head office. Reports must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of the breach.

In addition to the general Code of Conduct, all staff is required to have read and be knowledgeable of the GCI Child Safety Policy, and the Gender Policy, which focuses specifically on keeping children safe and treating women with respect and dignity.

2.5 Abuse of Position

Signatories will not abuse their position in the organisation in any way. Abuse of power includes but is not limited to favouritism, corruption, all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. Some specific instances are highlighted below:

- No signatory is permitted to have any form of sexual relation or any relation with any beneficiary (whether minor or adult) that could be deemed to be abusive by the standards of the country of assignment.
- No form of sexual harassment is tolerated.
- No signatory will extract or attempt to extract money or other benefits of any kind in return for employment and/or project participation.
- No signatory will extract or attempt to extract money or benefits of any kind in return for funding a specific (partner) organisation.
- No signatory will favour or support any beneficiaries privately without consent of Basis leadership.

2.6 Staff relations

All signatories will contribute to a constructive working atmosphere by refraining from improper behaviour towards colleagues. Improper behaviour includes but is not limited to violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, mobbing, or verbal abuse.

2.7 Payment or acceptance of bribe and/or other official charges

GCI does not condone the payment of bribes. These include, but are not limited to, illegal charges imposed for the release of goods from customs, “taxes” levied by local authorities in addition to or beyond the legal maximum, or illegal charges imposed by local authorities in exchange for mission registration, programme approval, or work permits. No signatory will accept a bribe of any kind.

2.8 Security policy

All signatories are aware of the security policy and its implication and will follow the local security plans/ guidelines and instructions.

2.9 GCI premises

All signatories must use GCI premises, owned, or leased, with a sense of responsibility and in accordance with established rules. Use of those assets in such a manner that may compromise GCI’s credibility or security in any way, is unacceptable.

2.10 ICT and Social Media

Signatories are expected to handle and use GCI communication media with due care. Non-work-related use of a computer and/or telephone is allowed if it does not interfere with the job.

Access to the internet and email system is for work-related usage only. Signatories are not allowed to visit sites, download material, or send emails with pornographic, discriminatory, (sexually) intimidating, violent, or criminal content.

GCI has company accounts on social media. When active on social media, we encourage staff to contribute to the transparency and accessibility of GCI. As a GCI ambassador all signatories should be aware of this, even when using social media privately.

2.11 Media

All signatories may only contact the media on behalf of GCI or act as a spokesperson after having the explicit permission of the authorized staff/Board member. In all other situations, the authorised representative is the President of the Board of Global Concerns India.

When dealing with the media, signatories will cooperate with the media to ensure that the public is accurately informed about GCI programs and the context in which the programs take place.

When dealing with the media, signatories will make sure that the media approach and portrayal of the beneficiaries of our programs are done in a respectful manner and in accordance with GCI's Child Safety Policy.

2.12 Photography

Photography must be kept to a minimum when visiting GCI activity, unless the signatory has been requested or assigned to document the activity. Informed consent is required for all photographs of individual and/or small groups of children and should be granted BEFORE the photo is taken. All signatories must follow the guidelines in the Child Safety Policy and Brand Book.

2.13 Confidentiality

All signatories will take care to ensure that the confidential information is properly protected and not disclosed to third parties. This includes any private information about children.

3. Breaching the Code of Conduct

3.1 Reporting on a breach of the Code of Conduct

All signatories have a duty to report suspected or confirmed breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Reports should be addressed by the person the breacher is responsible to. If the breach took place in the field, the report should also be addressed by the Team Head.

Any signatory against whom such an allegation is made should be removed immediately from their position and from all contact with the child / group in question until the allegation has been fully investigated and resolved. Where it is believed that the child is at serious risk of further harm, the local social services department or equivalent should also be alerted. Before this decision is taken GCI leadership must be advised of the details of the situation.

Reports should contain the following information:

- The name(s) of the individual(s) against whom the allegation is being made.
- The name of the individual making the allegation.
- What was seen and / or said.
- The date and location of the event.
- The names of any witnesses to the event. Witnesses must be informed by the report writer of their inclusion in the report.

The anonymity of the individual(s) making the allegation(s) will be protected.

Retaliation of any kind against any person who has reported an observed or suspected violation of the Code of Conduct is prohibited.

Maliciously or negligently making false allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct against a signatory is prohibited.

3.2 Consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct.

Any contract or agreement of cooperation with GCI will be affected by a breach of the Code of Conduct. Signatories who fail to comply with the Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

For signatories that are a member of the Board of Trustees, this document is directly linked to their appointment. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct might lead to suspension and / or dismissal through a majority decision of the Board of Trustees.

Where the laws of India, in implementing programming have been broken by the signatory, s/he may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings. In such cases GCI will seek legal advice on the matter.

4. Declaration and signature

By signing this document, the undersigned declares to have read it in full and understood its intention, implications, and possible consequences for his/her behaviour as representative of Global Concerns India. Any signatory who has questions about any aspect of this Code of Conduct and its potential implications for him/her has the responsibility of discussing it with his/her manager.

Signature _____

Name:

Designation:

Place:

Date: