

# THE PALME CENTER CODE OF CONDUCT

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The Olof Palme International Center (the Palme Center) and our member organisations represent the Swedish labour movement and its long and proud history of international solidarity work. This work has given us a good reputation within the international community, in many individual countries of the world and among past and present partner organisations. We are seen as a reliable, effective, democratic and transparent international partner.

The code of conduct reflects the fundamental values of the Swedish labour movement and provides guidance on how to act as a representative of the Palme Center. The purpose of the code of conduct is to maintain the good reputation of the Swedish labour movement and to ensure that all those who represent the organisation in different ways demonstrate a high level of professionalism in their work and to make accountability possible.

A number of other steering documents express the basic vision and objectives of the Palme Center and should be seen as an integral part of the code of conduct. These include the Palme Center's statutes, the operational policy, our policies on gender equality, anti-corruption, environment and climate, and conflict sensitivity, as well as our security instructions when travelling.

The code of conduct covers all individuals and organisations that in any form enter into agreements with the Palme Center. This means that in all cases, you must behave and act in accordance with the code of conduct and be alert and act to reduce the risk of violations.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Olof Palme International Center operates in the spirit of Olof Palme for democracy, human rights, and peace. Tolerance, understanding, and solidarity are fundamental values of the Palme Center and a prerequisite for international development cooperation.

The Palme Center's international solidarity work is based on relationships. These relationships between different actors: staff at the Palme Center, member organisations, partner organisations and other international organisations are a prerequisite for our work and should be characterised by mutual respect and sensitivity. Those covered by the code of conduct are expected to set an example in this respect and to be constructive and respectful in any conflict situations. There is a duty to be as professional as possible and to do everything possible to ensure that relations within your area of responsibility are the best possible.

The financial, material, and human resources of the Palme Center shall be managed responsibly. Acting responsibly means acting cost-effectively at all times, respecting the rights of individuals and giving consideration to the climate and the environment.

# RULES OF CONDUCT

## Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest exists when decisions are likely to be taken with an intent other than the best interests of the mission. A conflict of interest can exist whether something actually happens or if there is only a risk that it can be perceived as such. The existence of family ties, friendship relationships, or economic relationships between persons in the operation may affect the perception of the Palme Center's credibility, impartiality, and independence. The existence of a conflict of interest is particularly sensitive in relation to people within the target group and/or persons who are in any way involved in the project activity. This applies to the management of financial resources, contracting, procurement, travel, assignment of mission and participation in activities. Those covered by the code of conduct shall report possible conflicts of interest to the Palme Center's coordinator, management or Board. It is important to be particularly careful and abundantly clear if there is any uncertainty.

## Improper use of position of power

The activities of the Palme Center, which take place with and among people and organisations that to varying degrees rely on our support, are characterised by power relationships. This applies both in Sweden and in other countries. A position of power must never be used improperly for its own benefit or at the expense of others. An economic, or other close relationship with a person who is, or may be perceived to be, dependent on you is inappropriate and shall be avoided, as through such a relationship you risk exposing the other party to negative consequences, both in the current relationship and in the future. Should such a relationship arise, the coordinator or the management of the Palme Center shall be informed as soon as possible. In addition, a position of power must not be used to give other people advantages they would not normally have enjoyed. Conduct and relations shall be carried out in such a way that there can never be a perception that different services or benefits are expected or required.

## Corruption

The Palme Center defines corruption as an abuse of trust or power which results in undue profit, often financial, for a person, an organisation, or a political party. Corruption includes bribery, embezzlement, and fraud, as well as conflict of interest, nepotism and cronyism. What is perceived as corrupt behaviour is partly subjective and culturally determined and it is therefore important to have a dialogue on these issues with everyone involved in the activity. Corruption goes hand in hand with a lack of transparency and participation. The Palme Center, our member organisations and our partners all have an important role to play in the anti-corruption work. Those covered by the code of conduct shall therefore both act proactively and react to suspected irregularities in the projects or organisation with which they are working. If such are found, contact your immediate manager or the Secretary General of the Palme Center.

In order to protect those covered by the code of conduct from suspicions of impropriety, gifts, remuneration, services or other financial benefits with more than a purely symbolic value should not be accepted. Consult with your immediate manager in case of uncertainty.

For more information on anti-corruption work, see the Palme Center's anti-corruption policy.

## Security

Security concerns the work environment, safety, health and well-being of employees and partners, as well as the sustainability of the activities. The Palme Center has organisational security responsibilities for its employees and is responsible for discussing security aspects and measures with member organisations and partner organisations. But safety and risk awareness are also a responsibility of the individual employee.

Security must be taken into account when planning accommodation and travel and must also be taken into account outside of working hours. Those covered by the code of conduct should do their utmost not to expose themselves or others to risk during their mission. It is important to be aware of, and avoid, risk behaviours that could lead to yourself, your colleagues or partners facing situations of conflict or reprisals by authorities, threats, violence, blackmail, or other dangers. It is particularly important to take precautions when parts of project activities are sensitive and/or confidential. Information shall be handled with great care and communication shall be made using special communication channels. This applies to all communications and information, especially digital. Carelessness can directly endanger partners, colleagues, and yourself.

It is important to keep up to date with the country's security situation, follow the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' travel recommendation, the Palme Center's "Travel Safety" instructions and "Guidelines on Confidentiality Management".

## Media and information management

The dissemination of information through various channels is a central part of the Palme Center's operations. It is an effective way of getting our message and our goals across. Those covered by the code of conduct are expected to follow some key principles in relation to the media and the public. If you express yourself in the name of the Palme Center or can be seen as a representative of the Palme Center, the views you express shall be in line with the Palme Center's position. Public platforms, such as social media, where applicable, shall not be used to reveal sensitive information or otherwise used in such a way as to put the Palme Center's reputation at risk. Disclosure of confidential information risks seriously compromising the security of partners and activists, compromising the Palme Center's effectiveness, and reducing our credibility. Discretion is therefore expected, and confidential information must not be disseminated. Information that has not been made public and that is known to you because of your position may not be used for private benefit. It is understood that this does not affect the exchange of information within operations in order to ensure the greatest possible ownership and participation.

## Alcohol and drugs

A restrictive approach to alcohol shall be observed in all operations in Sweden and in other countries. Alcohol consumption is only permitted in exceptional cases, such as public dinners and similar events. On these occasions, it is important that alcohol consumption is moderate. An 'alcohol relationship' must not be developed within the framework of the Palme Center's activities and project funds must never be used to buy alcohol, which shall be financed privately or from the organisation's own resources. Meetings and decisions must not be moved to the pub or similar establishments and the offering of alcohol must not become a way of socialising. When on trips on behalf of the Palme Center, you should also restrict your alcohol consumption during your leisure time since you are a representative of the Palme Center throughout your stay. Alcohol consumption is strictly forbidden when travelling by car and, as a passenger, you

should always react if you suspect that the driver is under the influence of alcohol. All forms of involvement with and consumption of substances classified as narcotics are prohibited both during working hours and leisure time. Exceptions are made if the substances relate to prescription medicine for your own use.

## **Discrimination and harassment**

The Palme Center condemns all forms of harassment and discrimination and any such occurrences will never be tolerated. No single person or group, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, social status, political opinion, or functional variation may be discriminated against. Within the framework of international solidarity, this commitment is also important as a proactive approach and cooperation should promote the participation of all people on equal terms and must not make participation more difficult or impossible for anyone. No individual shall in any way be subjected to sexual harassment, whether in physical or mental form. Sexual harassment is behaviour in working life of a sexual nature that violates a job seeker or worker. It can involve touching, groping, jokes, suggestions, glances, and images that are sexually evocative and devaluing. It is the victim who decides whether or not the behaviour is unwelcome.

## **Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation**

All forms of sexual abuse and exploitation are prohibited, as are all forms of sexual contact between adults and children. It is unacceptable to exploit the vulnerability of a person or group in the context of development cooperation or humanitarian work.

## **Purchase of sexual services and use of pornographic material**

The purchase of sexual services is prohibited. All transactions, money, employment, goods, or services, in exchange for sexual acts or other forms of degrading behaviour and exploitation are prohibited. The purchase of sexual services here does not only refer to the purchase of sexual services from prostitutes, it also includes what is sometimes called "private assistance", that is, payment of bills, rents, clothing, school fees, and so on in exchange for sexual services. Visits to brothels, porn, strip clubs or similar establishments are not permitted. Furthermore, pornographic material must not be consumed using the technical equipment provided by the Palme Center, where applicable. If possible, hotels which distribute pornography through their television services should also be avoided. Any involvement with child pornography material is strictly prohibited.

## **Organised crime**

Activities linked to organised crime exist in many parts of society. These may include, for example, purchasing cheap capital goods in markets, exchanging money, choosing accommodation, visiting restaurants, and booking hotels and conference facilities. It is important to be aware of the existence of organised crime in order to avoid indirectly supporting it. One way to obtain information is to check with the local coordinator, manager and/or partner organisations in the country before making reservations.

## **WHEN THE CODE OF CONDUCT IS INSUFFICIENT**

In situations that are perceived as borderline cases and are not described in the code of conduct, you should ask yourself: Is it legal, fair and ethical? Are you sure that the Palme Center, as an organisation, would not be damaged if the situation became known to the outside world? Would you accept the situation if you were a partner of the Palme Center, a colleague,

a representative of a donor organisation or other interested party? If there is still uncertainty, contact your immediate manager.

## **VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Violations of the code of conduct or any suspicion of such shall be reported to the Palme Center's coordinator, management or Board who are required to investigate the matter and take any action. It is not always clear what is to be regarded as an infringement or not. Those covered by the code of conduct are encouraged to consult the Palme Center's coordinator, management or Board for advice. An active and open dialogue is essential.

Given that information regarding violations may be very sensitive, it shall always be handled with care, both by the person providing the information and by the person receiving it. There is also an opportunity to provide information via the Palme Center's whistle blowing function on the website.

The code of conduct is an integral part of all the agreements signed by the Palme Center. This means that the Palme Center has the opportunity to take contractual action in the unlikely event of a breach.

The employee suspected of an infringement shall be informed in writing of the suspicions and be given ten days to respond before any disciplinary action is taken. Violations may result in disciplinary sanctions, the most extreme effect of which is dismissal or dismissal.

Swedish law is applicable to those covered by the code of conduct whether in Sweden or in other countries. National legislation shall be complied with as long as it does not conflict directly with international conventions. If an infringement concerns a suspicion of a crime, the person concerned may also be reported to the police in Sweden or elsewhere.

## **OWNERSHIP AND FOLLOW-UP**

The content of this policy is reviewed and adopted annually by the Board of the Palme Center. The Secretary General is responsible for ensuring that the policy and related documents are known and complied with in operations and that follow-up of compliance with the policy is conducted annually.