

**CODE OF ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, INCLUDING THE PROTECTION AGAINST SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT AND EXPLOITATION AND THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

**(Updated: April 26th 2021)**

**EMPLOYEES, MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOGC INVOLVED IN THE SOCIETY'S GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAM MUST ACKNOWLEDGE AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE PROVISION OF THIS CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BY SIGNING AND RETURNING TO THE SOGC THE "DECLARATION" SECTION OF THIS DOCUMENT.**

**Purpose and scope**

The purpose of the SOGC Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct is to establish a common understanding of the standards of professional and ethical conduct expected of all SOGC employees, members, consultants and/or other representatives contributing to the Society's Global Health initiatives. It focuses more specifically on our commitment to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse which may occur in the context of our global health work, in Canada and abroad. All SOGC employees, members, consultants and other representatives of the Society involved in its Global Health must acknowledge and agree to abide by the provision of this Code of conduct by signing and returning to the SOGC the "Declaration" section of this document.

**Values and expected behaviour**

**1. Professional Conduct**

Employees, members, consultants and other representatives of the association involved in the SOGC's Global Health Program must ensure that they are:

1. In good standing with their professional college (if applicable) and further act accordingly to the Code of Ethics and Professionalism of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). See: <https://policybase.cma.ca/en/viewer?file=%2fdocuments%2fPolicyPDF%2fPD19-03.pdf#phrase=false>.
2. Respectful of the laws of the country and behave in a manner that respects local culture and customs.

## 2. Protection against Sexual Harassment and Exploitation

The SOGC promotes an environment free from sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. All allegations of possible transgressions will be treated seriously and confidentially.

### Definitions:

**Sexual harassment:** refers to “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, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders.”<sup>1</sup>

**Sexual exploitation:** refers to “any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another”.<sup>2</sup>

**Sexual abuse:** refers to “an actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions”.<sup>3</sup>

The employees, members, consultants and/or other representatives agree to:

- Create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation, abuse of power, and corruption.
- Never commit any form of harassment that could cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to an individual, especially women and children.
- Never exploit the vulnerability of a target group such as women and children or allow an individual to be put in a compromising situation.
- Never engage in sexual activity with persons under the age of 18, regardless of local legislation regarding the age of majority or consent. A lack of knowledge of the person’s actual age cannot be used as a defense.
- Never engage in sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of a target group (men, women, girls and boys). This constitutes serious misconduct and grounds for dismissal.
- Never exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours. All forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour are prohibited.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Secretariat. (February 2008). Secretary-General Bulletin – Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority. Source: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/620578?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header> .

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Secretariat. (2003, October). Secretary-General’s Bulletin Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. <http://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2003/13> .

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Secretariat. (2003, October). Secretary-General’s Bulletin Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Source: <http://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2003/13>. 3

- Never engage in sexual relations with beneficiaries. It is prohibited because it is based on unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of the work and global cooperation. This applies both during and outside working hours.
- Never accept or seek sexual services. This rule applies both during and outside working hours. Ensure that all confidential information, including reports of violations of these standards by colleagues, obtained from beneficiaries or colleagues, is handled properly and with the utmost confidentiality.
- Ensure that reports of violations of these standards are immediately provided to the Project manager or the Director of Accreditation and Education who will assume responsibility to receive these reports and investigate immediately.

### **3. Protection of Children**

SOGC Employees, members, consultants and/or other representatives further agree to:

- Not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts.
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Not invite unaccompanied children into their home, their hotel rooms or other accommodation unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children.
- Use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, digital cameras or social media inappropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material through any medium.
- Not use physical punishment on children.
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Comply with all relevant international and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy noncompliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.

### **Violation of the Code**

The violation of any provision of the Code of conduct by employees, members, consultants and/or other representatives may result in disciplinary action, including termination of the assignment or contract and may include reporting of the violations to the appropriate authorities.

## **Duty to Report Violations of the Code**

As part of our mutual accountability towards the SOGC, each of us, employees, members, consultants and/or other representatives, have a duty to report any violation of the Code by speaking confidentially to the Project manager and/or Director responsible for the Global Health Program.

A reported offense will be handled in an impartial manner towards any named individual, taking into account the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the information or allegations, and the possibility of an impartial investigation.

The following process will be applied when a violation is committed, suspected or observed:

- The employees, members, consultants, other representatives and/or the alleged victim (or his/her representative) shall report the violation, in a confidential manner, to the Project manager or the Director responsible for the Global Health Program.
- An investigation is conducted and a report is drafted by the Project manager and/or the Director responsible for the Global Health Program.
- Relevant authorities are informed (i.e.: Donors).
- An appropriate resolution and choice of action is determined.
- If unresolved, the SOGC's Leadership team and human resource advisor can be consulted for input.

## **Duty to Report Credible Allegations to Global Affairs Canada**

An allegation is credible when the source, nature, and information of the report suggest that the allegation is plausible and warrants further investigation. Cases occurring in the delivery of Canadian-funded projects include cases that:

- Are perpetrated by employees or associated personnel working on an initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada.
- May have a negative impact on the reputation of Global Affairs Canada or of a partner funded by Global Affairs Canada.

Global Affairs Canada expects partner organizations to:

- Report allegations within 48 hours of determining that an allegation is credible.
- Inform their Global Affairs Canada project officer if the issue will affect project implementation.
- Fill out the Reporting Form – Sexual exploitation and abuse allegations in international assistance and email it to the Global Affairs Canada PSEA Focal Point at [PSEA-PEAS@international.gc.ca](mailto:PSEA-PEAS@international.gc.ca) .

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**(Updated: April 26th 2021)**

**Declaration**

I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the SOGC Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for employees, members, consultants, or representatives involved in the association's Global Health Program, in support of the goals, values, and mission of the SOGC.

I understand that a breach of this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct or a violation of any of its provisions may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, termination of my contract or mandate, or removal from office, including reporting to the appropriate authorities.

Name of Project: .....

Name (print) .....

Signature.....

Date.....