



**CODE OF CONDUCT**  
**Staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers**  
**Version 1.0**

**Summary**

This Code of Conduct outlines the core values and principles defining the behavior expected of our staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers.

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## **1. CADUS CORE VALUES**

### **1.1. Why do we exist**

More and more people are affected by emergencies caused by confluence of different events, emerging gradually over time. Leading to a significant increase of humanitarian needs while leaving people more and more vulnerable to global challenges such as climate change and growing inequality. In the meantime, so-called new wars characterized by increasing numbers of asymmetric and protracted conflicts as well as mass violation of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law are challenging humanitarian support as never before. CADUS's purpose is to provide support to people in such crisis situations, both sudden onset disasters and complex slow-onset emergencies.

For us, acknowledging the changing nature of crisis and the constantly increasing number of emergencies based on combination of complex and simultaneously interrelated circumstances is essential in order to provide effective humanitarian support. CADUS's response to this complexity is by standing in solidarity with people affected by crisis.

This solidarity acknowledges the different realities of people in need, experiences made, and is aimed to create a space where people in need can define the support they need themselves. For us, humanitarianism does not only stand for a short-term relief of suffering, it is rather defined by working together with those affected by crisis in order to alleviate suffering. We are firmly convinced that humans are capable of making relevant choices even under the direst circumstances and that measures to support communities must be undertaken with an understanding of the actual needs of those involved.

It is our aim to assist in times of need and to perform that assistance on an equal level with our local partners, host communities and addressees of humanitarian aid. CADUS actively aims to antagonize a concept of charity resulting in paternalistic forms of 'help' provided to people perceived as passive victims. We want to utilize new technologies and collaboration in order to address modern humanitarian challenges and recognize a global responsibility to act collaboratively in order to support people affected by crisis.

### **1.2. The foundation of our work**

All our activities derive from the humanitarian imperative and its implications.

This means that we consider all people as free and equal in their dignity and rights! From this the humanitarian imperative ensues, that every human has the right to receive humanitarian assistance. Any humanitarian action is legitimized by four fundamental universal values. These values are indispensable and function as the basis of our work. As a fifth fundamental principle, CADUS defines accountability as an additional core value for our work.

## **The principles of our work: The Humanitarian Principles**

### ***Humanity***

By humanity we understand that suffering - no matter what the circumstances, the place or the cause - must be fought. All our actions are legitimized by humanity alone and are accordingly unconditional. The goal of our work is to fight suffering, to protect life and to prevent future suffering!

### ***Impartiality***

The right to receive humanitarian support applies to everyone, no matter what a person has done before. As humanitarian workers we are neither judges nor executors. This means that we treat people according to their needs and not according to whether they are considered to belong to an "ethnic", religious or political group.

### ***Independence***

It would be utopian to claim that humanitarian work takes place completely free of financial constraints. For us, it is important to deal with these monetary constraints in a transparent and open manner. We clearly oppose any funding that is linked to the interests of any political or religious party. Furthermore, a basic requirement for any donor is that they must not under any circumstances influence or direct our work and the way it is carried out. Furthermore, donors that support us must not contradict the values and principles we represent.

### ***Neutrality***

In our missions we do not take sides of any political, religious or 'ethnic' conflicts. We focus on supporting all people affected by crisis no matter if they align with our own beliefs and values or not. At the same time, we reserve the right to report on structures and policies that clearly violate the principles and values that we stand for and that our work is based on. Namely, political actions resulting in suffering, violation of international humanitarian law, violations of human rights and overall crimes against humanity. We furthermore report on and speak out against societal problems like racism, sexism etc. that result in structures of discrimination against groups of people. Bearing witness, advocating our core values and using our leverage as a humanitarian actor are fundamental efforts of our work.

### ***Accountability***

Good intention is not enough, and we want to be held accountable for our actions. People affected by crisis are ultimately our reason d'être and should be the ones in front of whom we have to legitimize our work. The constant

reflection of our work, our role and the results of our actions is essential. Only by doing this we can contradict reproducing structures perpetuating inequality and avoid producing additional harm to people already affected by crisis. As an accountable organization, we believe we must be willing to review, analyze, and critique our operations constantly, at all levels.

### **1.3. Legal Framework and compliance**

CADUS is an official signatory of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. For us as a humanitarian organization, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) sets the legal framework of our actions. IHL is a set of rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflict. It lays out the responsibilities of states and non-state armed groups during an armed conflict. This set of rules defines, among others, the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief in armed conflict, the freedom of movement of humanitarian relief personnel, the protection of civilians (including medical and humanitarian workers), and the protection of refugees, prisoners, the wounded and sick.

These rules protect us as an organization. Likewise, we are compliant to the humanitarian principles and have to protect and respect them at all times. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance is often carried out in regions where governmental structures might be weak and there is a lack of governance. This does not by any means imply that we are acting without any regulations. On the contrary, CADUS defined a broad set of rules and regulations in the following Code of Conduct that we as an organization are obligated to.

## **2. CADUS CODE OF CONDUCT**

CADUS is a non-profit, non-governmental, independent, self-governing and voluntary organization with its headquarters in Berlin, Germany - registered as a non-profit association. Based on the prior identified fundamental considerations and principles of our work, a whole set of values and policies is in place in order to promote transparency, integrity and accountability of CADUS. This Code is binding for all CADUS staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers. All addressees of this code are at all times compliant to its policies and rules, local and international law, as well as respective professional ethics, in particular medical ethics.

Please read this Code of Conduct and its supporting documents carefully and respect its policies at all times. It is our shared responsibility to uphold this Code!

### **2.1. Behavioral commitments**

CADUS's fundamental believe is that all humans share the same universal rights. Unfortunately, this does not reflect the reality we are living in. Our work and the spaces we are acting in are characterized by formal and informal structures of power, forms of discrimination and inequality. We are all part of these structures and it is indispensable to see our role within this system. Taking this as a fact allows us to critically reflect how we all reproduce mechanisms and structures resulting in actions opposing equality, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Hence, the following behavioral commitments are demanded in order to contradict the most harmful dynamics, violations of our values, and abuse of power.

We differentiate four intertwined spheres (Professional Ethics, Safe Workspace, Protection of Privacy, Policy against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) where colleagues, addressee of humanitarian aid, host communities or the organization as a whole are especially vulnerable in the case of inadequate and unprofessional behavior.

#### **2.1.1. Professional Ethics**

First of all, we expect all staff, volunteers and partners to strictly follow their professional ethics while working with CADUS

Each staff and partner of CADUS is a representative of the organization. Your actions and personal interactions have a lasting impact on how the organization and the humanitarian sector as a whole is perceived in host communities and among addressees of humanitarian aid.

Hence, it is indispensable to act in a professional manner at all times during deployments. This includes:

### **Reflecting privileges and oppose paternalistic assumptions**

Hence, I will:

- strictly reject any consideration of addressee of humanitarian aid as passive victims and acknowledge the social and political context of the people affected by emergency and crisis
- acknowledge that addressees of humanitarian aid have a saying and should, as far as possible, define their needs themselves
- consider the interests of the addressees of humanitarian aid as the paramount consideration at all times - as long as they do not contradict our core values and principles

### **Promote a realistic view of mine and the organization's capacity and what to expect**

Hence, I will:

- be open, honest and accountable in relationships
- take decisions based only on sound, objective and professional analysis
- recognize the limitations of professional experience and the organization's capacities
- only undertake tasks which can adequately be fulfilled and are covered by qualification of the respective profession

### **Act with integrity**

Hence, I will:

- handle power responsibly<sup>1</sup>
- promote ethical behavior by taking measures to discourage, prevent, and correct any unethical conduct of colleagues
- do not let the professional judgment be compromised by conflicts of interest
- perform duties faithfully and efficiently
- will not misuse drugs or alcohol while I am on duty

### **Cooperation and no competition with other humanitarian organizations**

Hence, I will:

- value the diversity of humanitarian actors
- support other humanitarian actors and local structures of host communities (as long as it does not contradict our core values and principles)
- show respect for others in the professional community even when disagreeing. Nevertheless, collegiality must not outweigh shared responsibility for ethical behavior

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<sup>1</sup> Within the logic of the humanitarian system there is an undeniable and inevitable imbalance of power between the ones financing humanitarian assistance, providing humanitarian support and receiving such assistance. Reflecting this power structure and imbalance critically is indispensable in order to avoid negative and undesired outcomes for addressees of humanitarian aid

### **Implementation of sustainable structures**

Hence, I will:

- accept responsibility for my area of work and follow commitments
- continually acquire needed knowledge, skills, and abilities and share this professional knowledge with colleagues in order to use all appropriate resources available and consult peers when possible

### **Differentiate between personal intention and public interest**

Hence, I will:

- be aware of biases, work to overcome them and make judgments based on evidence and objective analysis
- support the agency of others and not unnecessarily or inappropriately impose my will on others
- promote the understanding of principled humanitarian action

#### **2.1.2. Safe workspace**

Binding tools are necessary in order to counteract disrespectful behavior or any form of discrimination towards colleagues, host communities, partner organizations and addressees of humanitarian aid. CADUS is committed to creating a workspace without discrimination, intimidation, psychological or physical abuse. CADUS expects all staff, volunteers, visitors and partners to treat all people with respect and dignity at all times in any of CADUS's projects, offices and facilities.

Hence, I **will NOT**:

- act in any way that can indicate differential treatment of others or granting favors to some while excluding others. This includes any discrimination based on the assumption of race, opinions, lifestyle, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, disability, origin, religion or beliefs or any other markers of identity. Excluded from this is the granting of an advantage to a group of people with the explicit aim to alleviate a disadvantage that this group is subject to, e.g. special programs to support women
- at no times and by no means physically harm or abuse anybody
- act in any ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade anybody, or otherwise engage in any form of emotional abuse. Including language or behavior around and towards anybody that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, or demeaning.
- hire any client of CADUS's services to work in a personal or domestic capacity
- at no time use my position within the organization for personal gain
- neither support nor take part in any form of criminal, illegal, exploitative or abusive activity
- knowingly support, tolerate or encourage terrorism or the activities of those who embrace terrorism



- accept bribes or significant gifts (except small tokens of appreciation valued less than 50 USD that I will immediately notify to my line manager about) from governments, addressees of humanitarian aid, donors, suppliers or others
- wear or display weapons, or military emblems and/or uniforms

### 2.1.3. CADUS protection of privacy

CADUS is operating in a context which is characterized by complex dynamics and various, often contradicting interests, leaving people extremely vulnerable to the interest of different actors. Personal data and information can be - and often is - used against individuals or groups and can be instrumentalized. Additionally, security related information can be used to intentionally harm the organization and become a concrete security threat for staff, partners and addressees of humanitarian aid. This is why the protection of personal data is a fundamental responsibility during our work.

Hence, I will:

- respect the principle of confidentiality and the CADUS data protection protocol regarding patients, other crew members and partners at all times
- abide to applicable data protection law at all times
- comply with the organization's context-specific policies related to safety and security and not share their content with external actors - this obligation applies indefinitely
- Respect the privacy rights of all people at all times and present everyone in a dignified manner - never publish any pictures or videos taken in the context of your deployment if not approved by senior staff
- Obtain consent before taking any photographs or videos of any person at all times during deployment
- Never at no time use any technical device or social media channel to harass or insult anybody

### 2.1.4. Measurements against sexual exploitation and abuse

One form of especially harmful behavior applies to sexual exploitation and abuse. Unequal power structures among staff, between staff and addressees of humanitarian aid, and between international staff and host communities contains an undeniable risk of people exploiting their position of power in the context of sexual exploitation and abuse. CADUS will not tolerate its employees, its volunteers, visitors or partners carrying out any form of sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation or any other form of corrupt use of sexual power by no means.

Consequently, **I will NOT:**

- imply or request that any favor, including economic or sexual, should be given in exchange for access to any services or activities provided by CADUS
- at no times accept any form of child abuse (sexually and non-sexual), or exploitation of and violence against children
- engage in sexual relationships with children (as a child we see every person under the age of 18), regardless of the local age of consent (unless above the age of 18), i.e. the local or national laws of the country of deployment. Ignorance or mistaken belief of the child's age is not a defense
- at no times during my deployment with CADUS use the service of a sex worker, regardless whether this is prohibited in the country of deployment or not
- invite addressees of humanitarian aid into my home or guesthouse, or sleep in the same bed or room
- have sexual relationships with addressees of humanitarian aid, or with local colleagues and local third parties in the context of the operation. This regulation exists because there is an inherent conflict of interest and potential for abuse of power in such a relationship
- develop relationships that could in any way be deemed inappropriate, exploitative, or abusive. This includes engaging in sexual activity, whether or not the individual believes they have obtained consent. Consent is determined from the perspective of the person who experiences the prohibited behavior

## 2.2. Using your privileged position for personal gains

As a humanitarian organization we do not at no time work for personal interest. One especially severe violation of our values is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, such as:

- Financial Corruption, namely fraud, bribery, extortion and kickbacks
- Non-financial forms of corruption, such as:
  - o manipulation of humanitarian assistance to benefit non-target group,
  - o the allocation of relief resources in exchange of sexual favors, (see 2.1.4)
  - o preferential treatment in assistance or hiring processes for family members or friends (nepotism and cronyism), and
  - o coercion and intimidation of staff or addressees of humanitarian aid to turn a blind eye to, or participate in, corruption

### 2.2.1. Fiscal misconduct

In order to finance our work as a non-profit humanitarian organization we rely on private and public donations. CADUS is responsible for the donations and

funds received. Hence, we are legally and morally obliged to use them in a transparent and effective manner. We aim to assure a high integrity standard in our operations. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all CADUS staff to assure ethical use of funds including accurate bookkeeping which is in line with our articles of association, internal regulations and contractual conditions.

### **Examples of Fiscal Improprieties**

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Unauthorized or unethical use of CADUS funds;
- b. Fraudulent accounting or reporting of expenditures;
- c. Illegal or unethical fiscal activity (e.g., theft, embezzlement, etc.);
- d. Improperly gaining or potentially gaining financial benefit from addressees of humanitarian aid; and
- e. Aiding and abetting an other's fiscal impropriety.

### **2.2.2. Conflict of Interest**

Another form of personal gain which is not necessarily financial but potentially equally harmful are Conflict of Interest situation. These situations arise when the "private interests" of a board member, staff or volunteer competes or conflicts with the interests of CADUS e. V.. Such a situation might easily lead to a decision against the best interest of the organization. Private interests include, but are not limited to, financial and other interests of a board member, staff or volunteer themselves, and those of their affiliations including family and other relations, personal friends, the clubs and societies which they belong to and any person to whom they owe a favor or to whom they may be obligated in any way.

### **Examples of Conflict of Interest**

In the following, there are some common examples of Conflict of Interest situations outlined. Please note that is not a final list – Conflict of Interest cannot be defined in a generally applicable way and Its identification will always be a case to case decision.

#### **Procurement of Products or Services**

- A board member, staff or volunteer involved in a procurement process has interest in or is closely associated with a company which provides CADUS with paid services (e.g. training, consultancy, legal accounting), or bids for supply of goods or services.
- A board member, staff or volunteer or their close relative / friend has financial interest in a professional fundraiser (e.g. a marketing or public relations company) which CADUS engages to solicit donations.
- A board member, staff or volunteer leases or sells her/his property to CADUS.

#### **Contract Administration**

- A staff member responsible for contract administration solicits quotations from or employs contractors of CADUS for renovating her/his home.

#### Staff Administration

- A staff member appoints his/her relatives or friends to take up posts in the organization without a competitive application process.
- A candidate under consideration in a recruitment or promotion process is a family member, a relative or a close personal friend of the staff member responsible for the process.

#### Others

- A board member attends a meeting for evaluation of a supplier of which she/he is also a board member.
- A staff member responsible for assessing eligibility for services provided by CADUS is considering an application from his/her personal friend or relative (please note that this will not be viewed as a conflict of interest in a medical triage process as long as the triage SOPs are followed).

By acknowledging this Code of Conduct, I declare that I understand that it is my duty to disclose any Conflict of Interest, potential or actual. For such a declaration, I will use Part A of the "Conflict of Interest - Template" and submit it to the relevant manager or ethics office.

### **3.OBLIGATION TO REPORT**

By acknowledging this Code of Conduct, I declare to understand my obligation to report any observation of Conflict of Interest situation or fiscal misconduct. A willful failure to report a fiscal impropriety may be construed as aiding and abetting the wrongdoer. In addition to disciplinary action and/or termination of employment, fiscal impropriety may result in personal liabilities of the wrongdoer and criminal prosecution in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

For modalities of reporting incidents or suspected incidents and concerns please see section 5.

### **4.ENFORCEMENT**

By acknowledging this contract, I acknowledge that,

- I am obligated to report any incident or suspected incident regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether in the same agency or not. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers

constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment and can result in legal consequences

- It is my duty to report unacceptable behavior or malpractice among CADUS staff, partners, addressees of humanitarian aid and host communities
- any violation will be sanctioned, for CADUS staff and implementing partners sanction will follow the CADUS HR Manual
- violation of laws or regulations can trigger legal actions against me, my colleagues, CADUS or partners and suppliers that could result in: fines, suspensions, debarment or imprisonment.
- it is my duty to report any Fiscal Improprieties or Conflicts of Interest, whether potential or actual. A willful failure to report a fiscal impropriety may be construed as aiding and abetting the wrongdoer. In addition to disciplinary action and/or termination of employment, fiscal impropriety may result in personal liabilities to the wrongdoer and criminal prosecution in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. I also assure to report any form of corruption or forms of external pressure for corruption.

## **5. RESPONSIVENESS**

CADUS takes all concerns seriously and acts on all reports. In specific cases the protection of privacy rights of individuals may prevent detailed results of the investigation. Nevertheless, we will provide in all cases status updates and make our response as transparent as possible.

## **6. CHANNELS AND HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS**

You are highly encouraged to raise concerns or complaints at any time.

- For local operational matters please reach out to the Project Management.
- For matters related to your workplace, work environment and conflicts with colleagues reach out to the Human Resource Department
- For matters related to procurements and supply reach out to the Supply Chain Department
- For matters related to security reach out to the Security Department
- For matters related to the Code of Conduct reach out to the Ethics focal Point
- For matters related to finance, tax and accounting reach out to the Finance Department

When you feel uncomfortable addressing concerns or complaint to your supervisor or local management and/or if other channels are ineffective or unresponsive and/or if you want to make a complaint anonymously please consult the ethics focal point at the Berlin Head Quarter to file a complaint.

The complaint has to be submitted in writing to [hr@cadus.org](mailto:hr@cadus.org). Alternatively, a complaint file can be found at the CADUS webpage: <https://www.cadus.org/en/contact/complaint>

Within 96 hours of receipt of the complaint the Ethics Focal point will respond to the complainant in writing, advising that their complaint has been received and will be responded to in line with our Complaint Handling policy.

## **7. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Please note that if desired, we will assure anonymous complaint mechanisms. Furthermore, any reporting or complaint will be handled confidentially. CADUS e.V is aware of potential risks of retaliation. In case you experience any threat related to a possible retaliation please inform the relevant manager or the ethics focal point.

By acknowledging this Code I have taken cognizance of the existence of the framework document and committed to the standards and values it embodies, as well as the responsibility to be aware and alert, and to signal and report possible conflicting behavior to the line-management, colleague employee or via the CADUS complaint or whistle blowing mechanism.

Furthermore, I assure to act according to all supportive documents to this Code of Conduct such as CADUS Guidelines, Policies and Standard Operating Procedures.