

Code of Conduct

**THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH
OF NORWAY (ELFCN)
Mission Department (md)**

December 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Code of Conduct for the ELFCN Mission Department, is a written policy that sets out the expectations of proper behavior for people affiliated with the ELFCN Mission Department (hereafter referred to as ELFCN md). This Code of Conduct applies to all ELFCN md staff, regardless of location, and to everyone who represents the ELFCN md. We expect our partners and volunteers to follow the principles of this document or an equivalent Code of Conduct for their respective organization.

By following this Code of Conduct, it is intended that all staff will contribute to strengthening the professionalism and impact of the work of the ELFCN md and have a shared understanding of who we are and how we behave.

This document is written with significant input from Digni's ethical guidelines.

ELFCN'S FOUNDATIONAL VALUES, AND OUR PURPOSE

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway is an Evangelical Lutheran church denomination consisting of 82 churches. Our slogan is "Together in Mission", and the mission is referred to as the task that Jesus gave us in Matthew 28:19 - 20. Our goal in ministry is to reach the least reached with the gospel of Christ and that new disciples will be trained to reach out and make new disciple themselves.

PURPOSE

In order to achieve our goals as a church and as a mission, we need to have integrity, be trustworthy, and to maintain a good reputation among the people we want to serve. This is doable by the grace of God, but also by good behavior reflecting a strong inner life, and a transparent cooperation with each staff and partner. Each worker will face ethical dilemmas, and this guideline will be a means to guide and to hold everyone accountable for their own ethical choices and lifestyle. These guidelines are not replacing any national laws ~~neither~~ of Norway, or in any other countries, but they rather complement the laws. The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive as it does not cover up every ethical problem that can possibly arise. If there is doubt in how to face an ethical problem, the employee is immediately to consult with his or her leader.

If violation of these guidelines occurs, an investigation will take place, in which internal routines and rules for reporting ethical violations also will be addressed. The investigation will consider the anonymity of the person who has reported the situation to leadership, in order to protect the individual from any retaliation. Follow-up and support is to be given to the person or persons who have suffered because of a violation of these guidelines. Furthermore, an appropriate reaction will have to be activated toward the person or persons involved in the breach of this Code of Conduct. In serious cases, the investigation may result in termination of work contract or partnership agreement.

RESPONSIBILITY AND REPORTING

The mission leader of the ELFCN md has a particular duty to ensure that all employed team members are acquainted with the contents of these ethical guidelines, as well as ensuring that ethical awareness within the organization is continuously maintained and developed.

Everyone who has signed this Code of Conduct has the right and duty to give warning should they discover or suspect a significant breach of these guidelines – either through reporting channels or by reporting directly to his or her leader. No one who has warned in good faith is to experience any kind of retaliation. All workers are required to cooperate in the investigation of an eventual case.

False accusations on any action, purposely made by a staff member, is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action.

TO THE EMPLOYEE

As an ELFCN md employee, you are required to abide by the organization’s policies and procedures, the terms and conditions of your employment (as outlined in your employment contract), and to ensure your conduct is in keeping with the organization’s vision, mission, beliefs, values and strategic objectives.

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to formalize the standards by which you may need to behave in certain circumstances. The Code is designed for your guidance and protection.

CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATION

As an employee of the ELFCN md, I will:

- 1. Honor God and preserve the ELFCN’s integrity and reputation by ensuring that my professional and personal behavior complies with ELFCN’s foundational values.**
 - Respect the culture, legal system and customs for the nations I visit in my service to the ELFCN.
 - Maintain a professional and ethical awareness of the obligation the ELFCN as a partner has to local organizations. I will be aware of how I speak of and treat all our cooperation partners, member organizations and their partners, the employees of our partners and everyone associated with ELFCN’s mission work.
 - Do everything in my power to produce high quality work that is delivered on time. I will work toward good, transparent relationships with integrity and without manipulation for own gain.

- 2. Treat all people with respect and dignity, and refrain from all forms of favoritism, discrimination, exploitation and harassment.**
 - Treat all people fairly and with respect, keeping in mind that each person has tremendous value as God’s creation. I will ensure that I do not discriminate or

harass anyone based on gender, ethnicity, marital status, physical disability, religion or political or religious affiliation.

- Avoid harassment due to Norad's definition per February 2019: Actions, lack of actions or expressions that seem to be or by purpose are shameful, scary, hostile, degrading or humiliating to others.
- Strive to avoid favoritism among my colleagues and partners and treat everyone fairly.
- Uphold that marriage is God's intended frame for sexual relationships, for our protection, and this will be visible in my lifestyle and in my attitudes.
- Be aware that sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual offenses are not to occur in any way, shape or form. Sexual involvement with children and youth under the age of 18 is not tolerated, even when the laws of the land allow for a lower age of sexual consent than what is legal in Norway. The same applies to the personal consumption of material that abuses children and/or the distribution of such material. Misperception of a child's age does not pardon a person from being held legally responsible for such a violation.
- Be aware that paying for sex is strictly forbidden – whether through the exchange of money, goods, privileges or services, or any other form of transactions.
- Be conscious of the unequal power relation that plays into the hands of Christian organizations, expats, as foreigners in a foreign country or as foreign donors. Leaders at all levels have a particular responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain an environment that prevents any kind of exploitation, abuse or discrimination. Dominance or patronizing attitudes is not accepted. A deep respect for the local culture as it is perceived by our partners, should always be highly respected.

3. Be responsible for the resources made available to me through my position.

- Promote justice and minimize the negative effects of excessive wealth and human greed. I am aware that I am a steward of the resources made available through my organization. I will consider the culture I live in and the people I serve. I will spend modestly and adapt a spending lifestyle that is not creating unnecessary gaps between me and the people I serve.
- I will consider the environment in my priorities, my purchases and in my lifestyle.
- Be aware of the zero tolerance for corruption as lined out in the anti-corruption policy. I commit myself to work according to these principles and notify the proper authorities should I, during my work, be orientated to financial impropriety, such as corruption, embezzlement, theft, fraud, nepotism, inaccurate financial reporting methods or any other financial unfaithfulness.
- Use all equipment, car logging, work hours, fill in the travel financial claims and deal with money owned by the ELFCN with the highest integrity.
- Not accept significant gifts or any remuneration from governments, beneficiaries, partners, donors, suppliers and other persons, which have been offered to me as a result of my employment with the ELFCN. Gifts can be accepted if it is culturally inappropriate not to, but will have to be reported to the first line leader.
- Not abuse my position as an ELFCN employee by requesting any personal service or favor from others in return for financial or any kind of assistance by ELFCN.

- Acknowledge that effective media coverage of the ELFCN activities is crucial to the success of our work. I will not give interviews or provide information to the media unless I have been specifically authorized to do so. I will not disclose information that is confidential or may be used to harm the ELFCN, our partner or any individual.
- Accept that after the determination of my contract with the ELFCN, I will not share confidential information that I obtained through my position in the ELFCN, and I will not speak or write in a way that gives the ELFCN a negative reputation. Regarding situations within the ELFCN that are worthy of critique, criticism is to be communicated through ELFCN's own channels, and not through traditional or social media.
- Be aware of ELFCN md's anti-corruption policy, and act accordingly. This policy contains more information on anti-corruption, including whistleblowing and reporting channels.
(https://delfrikirken.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/Misjon/intern/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?source=doc=%7B93E22E14-C799-4B45-9D27-DCB2419BEA75%7D&file=ELFCN%20anti%20corruption%20policy.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

4. Ensure the safety, health and welfare of all ELFCN employees, volunteers and contractors.

- Be proactive in taking safety measures for self as well as for co-worker's and family members. Talking about homes in this document, we mean the homes and offices of long-term workers abroad and any house, office or apartment that is paid by the ELFCN and that has a rental contract.
- Keep an extra storage of emergency items in my house, office or car, as recommended for the country I am in, and according to which situations that may occur. I will always focus on what I can do to be less vulnerable to possible threats.
- Be continuously aware of the security situation in the country I am in. Further, I will comply with the security recommendations of the host country and listen to UD's (MOFA) security advise at all stages - in agreement with the mission leader.
- Be pro-active in informing management of significant changes to the security situation I am in.
- Avoid any unnecessary risk to safety, health and welfare of myself and others, including partner organizations, beneficiaries and visitors. I will not jeopardize a security situation by carrying a weapon or so on, unless I have a written permission to do so by my mission leader. I am aware that my decisions at work or privately, can put others in danger – and I will at all means avoid that.
- Drive safely and legally.
- Make sure my home and work place is as safe as possible, making sure there is updated fire equipment, such as smoke alarms and fire extinguisher, safe doors and locks, sufficient emergency exits and generally remove health threats to the best of my ability.
- Always consider safety when planning new projects as well as in daily life arrangements. This also applies to cases of booking hotels or guesthouses for the ELFCN.

5. Ensure that my personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standards and in keeping with ELFCN md's beliefs, values and aims.

- Be accountable for my actions. I will not use unequal power relationships for my own benefit. I will never overstep other people's physical boundaries and commit to treat all people honorably in every way. I will especially be careful and wise when dealing with vulnerable people, including women, children and marginalized people.
- Avoid involvement in any activity that contradicts the human rights and is not in line with ELFCN values.
- Refrain from political activity in my host country, unless permission is given by the mission leader.
- Be aware that I, as a leader or as an expat, have particular responsibility to demonstrate integrity and a high standard of values.
- Work with others in an open and participative way, co-operating both within and across teams to support the delivery of organizational results.
- Take responsibility for the quality and timeliness of my own work to contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives.
- Not work under the influence of alcohol in ways that may impair my judgment or have an adverse impact on the behavior exhibited on ELFCN's premises or when representing the ELFCN at external functions.
- Not use, or be in possession of, illegal substances.
- Seek to ensure that my personal conduct does not negatively impact or undermine my ability to undertake the role for which I am employed.

6. Perform my duties and conduct my private life in a manner that avoids possible conflicts of interest with the work of the ELFCN and my work as an employee of the organization.

- Declare any financial, personal, family or close relationship interest in matters of official business which may impact on the work of the ELFCN – e.g. contract for goods/services, partner organizations, civil authorities, beneficiary groups.
- Not accept any additional employment or consultancy work outside the ELFCN without management approval to ensure there is no conflict of interest and that I remain within appropriate limits in respect of working hours.

I have carefully read and I understand the ELFCN md Code of Conduct. I hereby agree to abide by its requirements and commit to upholding the standards of conduct required to support ELFCN's vision, mission, beliefs, and strategic objectives.