

- **Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC)**

BURMESE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION CODE OF CONDUCT

Version 2.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC) is a community-based organization dedicated to advancing the wellbeing, dignity, and rights of individuals and communities affected by displacement, marginalization, and systemic inequality. We work in collaboration with partners, service providers, and diaspora networks to deliver development, advocacy, humanitarian assistance, and community support programs in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

As an organization built on shared values of respect, accountability, social justice, and compassion, BCDC is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct across all areas of its work. This includes the behavior of staff, board members, volunteers, contractors, and partners who act on behalf of BCDC or in its name.

This **Code of Conduct** sets out the expectations and responsibilities of all those associated with BCDC. It aims to:

- Promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for everyone;
- Safeguard the dignity, rights, and wellbeing of all people we engage with;
- Prevent all forms of exploitation, abuse, and corruption;
- Strengthen trust and accountability between BCDC and the communities we serve;
- Align our organizational practices with the ACFID Code of Conduct and relevant national and international legal obligations.

All individuals covered by this Code are expected to uphold these standards in both their professional duties and personal conduct when representing BCDC.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a clear and consistent framework for ethical, respectful, and accountable behavior by all individuals representing the Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC).

This Code serves to:

- Define the professional and personal conduct expected of all BCDC personnel;
- Protect the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of the communities, individuals, and partners we work with;
- Prevent misconduct, including discrimination, harassment, exploitation, abuse, corruption, and conflict of interest;
- Promote a culture of integrity, transparency, and continuous learning;
- Support compliance with BCDC’s internal policies, legal responsibilities, and the ACFID Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is a living document that supports BCDC’s mission and values. It is not only a standard for behavior but also a foundation for organizational accountability, trust, and credibility—within our communities, among our partners, and in the wider development and humanitarian sector.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Code of Conduct applies to all individuals engaged with or representing the Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC), regardless of their role, location, or contractual arrangement. This includes, but is not limited to:

- BCDC Board Members and Executive Committee members
- Paid staff (full-time, part-time, or casual)
- Volunteers and interns
- Contractors and consultants
- Partner organizations and service providers acting on behalf of or in collaboration with BCDC
- Representatives participating in community engagement, advocacy, events, or project implementation under BCDC's name

All individuals covered by this Code are expected to:

- Comply with the standards and responsibilities set out herein;
- Uphold BCDC's values and commitments in all professional and public contexts;
- Familiarize themselves with related organizational policies and procedures;
- Report any conduct that violates the Code or puts others at risk of harm.

This Code applies across all BCDC activities, whether conducted in Australia or overseas, and is applicable during:

- Daily work or field assignments
- Public events, workshops, or official travel
- Digital engagement, including email, messaging, and social media
- Informal interactions where an individual is acting or perceived to be acting on behalf of BCDC

The Code complements BCDC's wider governance instruments, including:

- BCDC Strategic Plan
- BCDC Safeguarding Policies
- Human Resource and Volunteer Management Manuals
- ACFID Code of Conduct
- Applicable national and international laws and standards

Failure to adhere to this Code may result in disciplinary action or termination of engagement, in line with BCDC's complaints and misconduct procedures.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

BCDC's Code of Conduct is rooted in a set of guiding principles and values that shape our work, relationships, and accountability to the communities we serve. These principles not only reflect our internal commitments but also align with the ethical framework of the ACFID Code of Conduct and the Core Humanitarian Standard.

4.1 Respect and Dignity

We believe that every individual has inherent worth and dignity. We treat all people—regardless of their background, status, identity, or beliefs—with fairness, empathy, and cultural sensitivity.

4.2 Integrity and Honesty

We act with transparency, truthfulness, and ethical responsibility in all our work. We are accountable for our actions and decisions and uphold the trust placed in us by the communities we serve and our partners.

4.3 Social Justice and Human Rights

We are committed to advancing equity, justice, and the protection of human rights. We stand against discrimination, oppression, and all forms of abuse or exploitation.

4.4 Inclusion and Equity

We value diversity and promote the full and meaningful participation of women, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups in all aspects of our work. We are committed to removing barriers to inclusion.

4.5 Accountability and Transparency

We are responsible for the proper use of resources, the delivery of quality outcomes, and the accurate and honest reporting of our actions. We welcome feedback, support learning, and continuously improve our practices.

4.6 Do No Harm

We are committed to ensuring that our work does not cause harm to the people or environments we engage with. We actively assess and mitigate risks to safety, dignity, and wellbeing across all programs and relationships.

These values guide the expected behaviors described in the following sections. All individuals representing BCDC are expected to embody these principles in both professional duties and public conduct.

5. EXPECTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

All individuals representing BCDC are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the organization's values and ensures the safety, dignity, and trust of the people we serve. This includes acting professionally, ethically, and lawfully at all times.

The following standards apply across all BCDC activities and partnerships.

5.1 Respect and Dignity

- Treat every person—regardless of background, ability, status, identity, or belief—with courtesy and respect.
- Promote the dignity, voice, and autonomy of community members and rightsholders.
- Listen actively and respectfully to others, and engage in constructive dialogue even when perspectives differ.
- Maintain respectful relationships with colleagues, partners, volunteers, and stakeholders.

5.2 Integrity and Honesty

- Be truthful and transparent in all communications and decision-making.
- Represent BCDC honestly, and do not engage in deception, misrepresentation, or misuse of your position.
- Uphold all financial and reporting responsibilities accurately and in good faith.
- Declare and manage any potential or actual conflicts of interest.

5.3 Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination

- Actively promote an inclusive environment that welcomes diversity and encourages equal participation.
- Reject all forms of discrimination, exclusion, or bias based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, language, or socio-economic background.
- Speak out and act when witnessing exclusion, harassment, or marginalization of others.

5.4 Accountability and Transparency

- Take responsibility for your actions and decisions, and be open to feedback and learning.
- Report mistakes, concerns, and incidents promptly through the appropriate channels.
- Ensure responsible use of organizational and donor resources.
- Share information truthfully and accessibly with stakeholders and communities.

5.5 Safeguarding and Protection from Harm

- Uphold BCDC’s safeguarding and protection policies at all times.
- Prevent and avoid any form of abuse, exploitation, harassment, or neglect—whether physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or verbal.
- Promote safe environments for children and vulnerable adults, and act immediately if risks are identified.
- Never use your position of power or trust to take advantage of others.

5.6 Professional Conduct and Conflict of Interest

- Maintain appropriate boundaries in all working relationships, especially with program participants or beneficiaries.
- Refrain from accepting gifts, favours, or payments that could influence your decisions or compromise your role.
- Do not engage in activities—professional or personal—that conflict with BCDC’s mission or may damage the organisation’s credibility.
- Dress and communicate professionally in settings where you represent BCDC, including in public forums and online.

6. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

BCDC maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of misconduct, abuse, and unethical behaviour. The following actions are strictly prohibited and constitute a serious breach of this Code of Conduct.

Engaging in any of the behaviors listed below may result in disciplinary action, including termination of engagement, legal action, or referral to relevant authorities.

6.1 Abuse, Exploitation, and Harm

It is unacceptable to:

- Physically, sexually, emotionally, or psychologically abuse any person.
- Engage in sexual activity with children or vulnerable adults under any circumstances.
- Use power or position to coerce, exploit, or take advantage of others for personal, sexual, financial, or political gain.
- Fail to report observed or suspected abuse or safeguarding concerns.

6.2 Discrimination and Harassment

The following behaviours are prohibited:

- Discrimination or marginalisation based on gender, ethnicity, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other identity or status.
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation, or degrading treatment of colleagues, volunteers, or community members.
- Sexual harassment, including unwanted advances, jokes, comments, or gestures of a sexual nature.

6.3 Fraud, Corruption, and Misuse of Resources

BCDC does not tolerate:

- Fraudulent activities, misrepresentation, or falsification of documents or reports.
- Misuse or theft of funds, equipment, or other organizational resources.
- Accepting bribes, kickbacks, or unauthorized gifts that may influence professional decisions.
- Unauthorized or unethical use of BCDC's name, branding, or assets for personal benefit.

6.4 Breach of Confidentiality and Privacy

Unacceptable behaviours include:

- Disclosing sensitive or personal information about clients, staff, partners, or communities without consent or legal basis.
- Sharing internal documents, reports, or communications without authorisation.
- Using confidential information for personal gain or to harm others.

6.5 Inappropriate Conduct in the Workplace and Public

The following actions are not tolerated:

- Consuming alcohol or drugs during work-related activities where it impairs judgment or professionalism.
- Engaging in violent, aggressive, or offensive behaviour in any BCDC-related setting.
- Engaging in relationships that compromise the professional boundary with beneficiaries or subordinates.

6.6 Non-Compliance with Policies and Legal Obligations

It is unacceptable to:

- Disregard organisational policies, procedures, or safety protocols.
- Fail to cooperate with investigations, audits, or compliance reviews.
- Violate local, national, or international laws while representing BCDC.

All individuals covered by this Code must report breaches of these standards through BCDC's designated reporting channels. Silence or inaction in the face of misconduct may itself be considered a breach of responsibility.

7. REPORTING MISCONDUCT AND BREACHES

BCDC is committed to creating a culture of openness, safety, and accountability. All individuals covered by this Code of Conduct are not only expected to uphold it but also to **take action when it is breached.**

7.1 Duty to Report

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and partners must report:

- Any breach or suspected breach of this Code of Conduct
- Any act of abuse, exploitation, or harm
- Any case of fraud, theft, harassment, or discrimination
- Any conduct that endangers the safety, rights, or dignity of others

Reports must be made promptly, whether the misconduct was witnessed directly, reported by another person, or reasonably suspected in good faith.

Failure to report serious concerns—particularly safeguarding violations—may itself be treated as a breach of duty.

7.2 How to Report

Reports can be made through the following channels:

- Directly to a **Supervisor, Manager, or Board Member**
- To BCDC's **Safeguarding Focal Point** or **Complaints Officer**
- Via BCDC's **Complaints Handling Procedure** (confidential channel)
- Through BCDC's **Whistleblower Protection Mechanism**, if anonymity is required

All complaints or concerns will be received respectfully, treated seriously, and handled in line with BCDC's **Complaints Handling Policy** and **Whistleblower Protection Policy.**

7.3 Protection of Whistleblowers

Anyone who reports concerns in good faith will be:

- Protected from retaliation, threats, or discrimination
- Treated with respect and confidentiality
- Provided with follow-up information where appropriate

False or malicious reports made to harm others will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

7.4 Confidentiality and Sensitivity

- All reports will be managed with strict confidentiality.
- Sensitive reports (especially safeguarding-related) will be shared only with authorised personnel.
- The safety and wellbeing of the complainant, survivor, or witness will be prioritized at all times.

8. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

8. Disciplinary Measures

BCDC takes all breaches of this Code of Conduct seriously. Any behaviour that violates the standards outlined in this document may result in disciplinary action, proportionate to the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Disciplinary measures are designed to:

- Ensure accountability and justice
- Uphold the safety and rights of affected individuals
- Protect the integrity and reputation of BCDC
- Deter further breaches through clear consequences

8.1 Types of Disciplinary Action

Depending on the circumstances and findings of a formal review or investigation, disciplinary measures may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Mandatory retraining or supervision
- Removal from duties or reassignment
- Suspension (with or without pay)
- Termination of employment, contract, or volunteer engagement
- Reporting to police, regulatory bodies, or other relevant authorities

8.2 Principles of Fair Process

All disciplinary actions will be based on:

- A fair and objective assessment of the facts
- An opportunity for the individual to respond to the concerns raised
- Application of organizational policies and relevant laws
- Documentation of findings, decisions, and actions taken

8.3 Referral to Authorities

BCDC is legally and ethically obligated to refer serious incidents—such as criminal behavior, child abuse, or financial fraud—to appropriate government or regulatory authorities.

8.4 Restoration and Learning

In cases of minor or first-time misconduct, corrective action may also include:

- Mentoring or coaching
- Mediation
- Written apology or restitution
- Organisational learning and improvement measures

Disciplinary processes are not only punitive but are also intended to reinforce ethical culture and shared accountability across the organization.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

All individuals engaged with or representing BCDC—including employees, board members, volunteers, contractors, and partners—are required to acknowledge and comply with this Code of Conduct as a condition of their engagement or affiliation with the organization.

9.1 Responsibility for Compliance

By accepting a role within BCDC, each person agrees to:

- Read and understand the BCDC Code of Conduct
- Uphold its standards in all professional and public settings
- Act with integrity, respect, and accountability
- Promptly report any breaches or concerns
- Cooperate fully with any investigation or review processes

Ignorance of the Code or its principles will not be accepted as a defense for misconduct.

9.2 Acknowledgement Process

All individuals must complete and sign a separate **Policy Sign-Off Form**, which confirms that they have:

- Received, read, and understood the Code of Conduct
- Been briefed on relevant organisational policies, including safeguarding, complaints handling, and whistleblower protection
- Agreed to comply with the behavioural and ethical standards outlined by BCDC

The signed form will be retained in the individual's personnel or volunteer file for compliance and audit purposes.

9.3 Ongoing Commitment

Compliance with this Code is an ongoing obligation. BCDC may require individuals to reaffirm their understanding:

- During periodic reviews or annual performance assessments
- Following policy updates or changes to the Code
- As part of refresher training or re-induction

10. CONCLUSION

The BCDC Code of Conduct is more than a set of rules—it is a shared commitment to uphold the values of **dignity, respect, accountability, inclusion, and justice** in everything we do.

Whether working in the community, collaborating with partners, managing programs, or representing BCDC in any capacity, every individual has a responsibility to:

- Promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment
- Prevent harm and misconduct
- Demonstrate integrity in decision-making
- Be accountable to the communities we serve and to each other

Adhering to this Code helps protect the people we work with, strengthen our credibility, and ensure that our mission is delivered with honesty, transparency, and care.

We each have a role in building an organisation that leads by example—where values are lived, not just written.

This Code will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and responsive to organizational growth and emerging challenges.

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