

The SheDecides Support Unit (SDSU) is hosted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Central Office and aligned with its various policies and procedures.

This Code of Conduct is drawn from IPPF's Policy Handbook

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## SHEDECIDES CODE OF CONDUCT

### Introduction

1. SheDecides is committed to a human rights framework which prohibits any discrimination, exclusion or restriction on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, partnership status, pregnancy or parental status, disability health or any other analogous personal status.
2. SheDecides recognizes that the right to be free from abuse, exploitation and harassment is enshrined in international human rights law namely [ICERD](#), [ICCPR](#), [ICESCR](#), [CEDAW](#), [CAT](#), [CRC](#), [CRPD](#).<sup>1</sup> SheDecides additionally acknowledges that sexual harassment and abuse is a form of gender-based violence.
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4. Whilst recognizing that local laws and cultures may differ from one country to another, this Code of Conduct is based on international human rights standards. Where the Code of Conduct is more stringent than local law, the Code applies.
5. The policy lays out the commitments made by SheDecides, and applies to all staff and the SheDecides community including but not limited to Champions, SheDecides movements, Guiding Group members, young leaders, partners, donors, volunteers and contractors.
6. SheDecides works to ensure people are free to make choices about their bodies, their lives and their future, as captured in the SheDecides Manifesto.
7. SheDecides recognizes the need to provide an environment able to address inherent unequal power dynamics.

### Code of Conduct Standards

Anyone in the SheDecides community is required to:

8. **Uphold the integrity and reputation of SheDecides by ensuring that professional and personal conduct is consistent with SheDecides values and standards**
  - i. treat all people fairly with respect and dignity;
  - ii. when working in an international context or travelling internationally on behalf of SheDecides, be observant of all local laws and be sensitive to local customs;
  - iii. ensure that individual conduct does not bring SheDecides into disrepute and does not impact on or undermine the ability to undertake the work of the movement;

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<sup>1</sup> International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- iv. not work when incapacitated by alcohol or other intoxicating substances or use, or be in possession of, illegal substances while implementing SheDecides activities or traveling on behalf of SheDecides;
- 9. Not engage in abusive or exploitative conduct**
- v. not engage in sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18). Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence;<sup>2</sup>
  - vi. not engage in any sexual relationships with programme participants<sup>3</sup>, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics;
  - vii. not engage in any exploitative activities with children or vulnerable adults including those that are commercial such as child labour or trafficking;
  - viii. not physically assault a child or vulnerable adult;
  - ix. not emotionally or psychologically abuse a child or vulnerable adult.
- 10. Ensure the safety, health and welfare of all volunteers, staff and communities**
- x. adhere to all legal and organizational health and safety requirements in force at the location of work;
  - xi. behave in a manner such as to avoid any unnecessary risk to the safety, health and welfare of themselves and others, including partner organizations, movements and communities;
  - xii. be responsible with social media accounts and, when using photos obtained during work, always gain informed consent and preserve the privacy and dignity of all individuals, ensuring that they are not exposed to risk from the use of their image.
- 11. Not behave in any way which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for that individual**
- xiii. be respectful and considerate in behaviour to all, particularly in the working environment
  - xiv. not engage in sexual relationships with people who are in direct line of supervision;
  - xv. not behave in such a way as to indicate that sexual favours may provide a basis for work-related advancement, or a way in which to avoid work-related detriment;
  - xvi. not to be inappropriately physical or flirtatious or sexually explicit in the workplace;
  - xvii. not use offensive language or belittle or humiliate others;
  - xviii. not victimize others for speaking up or raising complaints;
  - xix. not abuse any position of power; 'Abuse of power' is the misuse of a position of power or authority which results in mistreatment or takes advantage of a person or organization, including but not limited to for personal interest.
- 12. Be responsible for the use of information, assets and resources to which they have access by reason of working with SheDecides in any capacity**
- xx. be accountable for all SheDecides money and property given to them and ensure that assets and resources are used in a responsible manner;
  - xxi. not use SheDecides IT equipment, software, e-mail or social media platforms to engage in activity that is illegal under local or international law or that encourages conduct that would constitute a criminal offence. This includes any material that

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<sup>2</sup> This prohibition does not apply to young leaders or volunteers who are in a consensual relationship, with each other and are under the age of 18 but over the applicable age of majority or consent

<sup>3</sup> A SheDecides programme participant is someone who receives a service from SheDecides or takes part in SheDecides activities

intimidates or harasses any group defined by reference to the characteristics set out in paragraph 1 of this Code of Conduct;

- xxii. not use SheDecides IT equipment to view, download, create, distribute or save in any format inappropriate or abusive material including but not limited to pornography or depictions of child abuse.

### **13. Perform their duties and conduct their private life in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest**

- xxiii. declare any financial or personal interest in matters of official business which may impact on the work of SheDecides. A “personal interest” is any sort of interest which might cause someone to be concerned that an individual’s decision-making might be influenced by that interest. Such an interest might include the financial or other interests of an individual’s spouse, partner, parent, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild, in-law or close intimate of which the individual is aware;
- xxiv. not be involved in awarding benefits or contracts for goods or services to any person with whom they have a financial, personal, family or close intimate relationship, or in any other circumstances which might cause a reasonable person to be concerned that the individual’s decision-making might be influenced by any financial or personal interest;
- xxv. not act in ways that directly contradict or violate the spirit and vision of SheDecides expressed in the manifesto and/or other SheDecides principles and standards, such as through written or spoken comments or policy decisions;
- xxvi. not accept significant gifts from governments, communities, individuals with whom SheDecides works, donors, suppliers and other persons which have been offered as a result of working with SheDecides in any capacity.

### **14. Uphold confidentiality**

Exercise due care in all matters of official business, and not divulge any confidential information relating to colleagues, work-related matters or any sensitive information unless legally required to do so.

### **Complaints and reports**

- 15.** Any potential incident, abuse or concern that anyone in the SheDecides community witnesses, is made aware of, or suspects, which appears to breach the standards contained in this Code, should be reported through [IPPF SafeReport](#), IPPF’s external incident reporting service.
- 16.** Anyone making a report shall be protected by the whistleblowing/ complaints policies of the organisation.

### **Enforcement**

- 17.** This Code of Conduct is applicable to staff and people in the SheDecides community as set out in paragraph 4 above, including those who receive grants from the Support Unit. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in the termination of contracts or roles in the Movement.
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