



## Code of Conduct Viva Salud

Health is a concern we all share. It is also a fundamental right. Unfortunately, for most people this fundamental right is threatened by poverty, inequality, exploitation and war.

Only when politics and the economy are put at the service of the people - instead of shareholders' profits - the right to health can become a reality. Individuals, communities and countries should be able to take their fate into their own hands. Sovereignty is a necessary condition for fair and healthy policies that respond to people's needs. Strong social movements are key because they represent the voices of workers, farmers and the marginalized and are able to challenge the balance of power in society in their advantage.

Viva Salud is a Belgian NGO that is convinced that every individual and community has a right to health. This is why we support social movements in their struggle for the right to health. In the Philippines, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cuba and elsewhere, we provide our partners with advice and support, helping them to build strong(er) organizations. We also support them financially through the grants and donations we raise in Belgium. Furthermore, we support their struggle through our activities in Belgium and our international networking such as with the global People's Health Movement.

Viva Salud fights for the right to health worldwide. To achieve this, we base ourselves on our key values:

### **Social justice**

We are interested in social, economic and political factors that have an impact on the health of exploited and oppressed populations.

### **Solidarity**

We support organisations in our partner countries who attack the roots of health problems. In Belgium, we set up training programmes and campaigns, we mobilise our sympathisers and we act as part of a global movement for the right to health. Together, we have more strength to influence political choices.

### **Activism**

We support and back militant social organisations who work towards genuine changes, that further the right to health, social justice and international solidarity.

### **Sovereignty**

We support grass-roots movements and local initiatives, because lasting change starts at the bottom and isn't imposed.

Our code of conduct helps us to translate our vision, mission, theory of change and values into our day-to-day activities.

It provides guidelines for our staff, management, interns, volunteers and board members but we also invite our partners and suppliers to adhere to it.

## **1. Our staff, volunteers, donors, sympathisers, target groups**

We expect our staff and volunteers to act in consistence with the **human rights framework** to which Viva salud adheres and to, particularly, respect the rights of workers, women and children.

We value **diversity** among our staff and volunteers and promote equal opportunities regardless of race, age, religion, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or (dis)ability. We do not tolerate discrimination nor sexist behaviour.

**Gender equality** in particular is translated in concrete measures to put gender mainstreaming in actual practice in our activities, projects and programs. Likewise, participation of women and men in decision making is encouraged.

With regard to compensation and remuneration, we are advocating **solidarity** and therefore, for example, we have a flat salary scales.

For our staff, we apply flexibility in working hours and tasks in order to accommodate **work-life balance**. Staff is offered opportunities to join relevant training and their job content and tasks can evolve during their career according to their evolving personal interests and organisational needs.

The **physical integrity and mental wellbeing** of our staff and volunteers is important and therefore, we take adequate measures for their health, safety and security. We expect everyone to avoid any unnecessary risks to the safety, health and welfare of themselves or others.

We expect everyone to **respect other people's dignity** in interpersonal relations and do not tolerate sexual intimidation.

We show **respect for volunteers and donors** and listen to their needs. We try to keep their interests in mind and we respect their privacy.

We value **diversity among the participants** in our activities and seek to promote participation of minorities that might feel/be left out.

We **avoid conflict between individual and organisational interests**. Therefore, we encourage staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders to communicate transparently about potential conflicts in matters of business, politics or the acceptance of gifts or compensations for services. Whenever potential conflicts of interest occurs and are reported, appropriate measures will be taken by the management or the Board.

We expect our staff and volunteers to report any wrongdoing or suspicion of violations of our code of conduct through the appropriate mechanisms.

## 2. The use of natural and financial resources

Notwithstanding our advocacy's focus on structural change, we do not ignore our own responsibility and we try to walk the talk with regard to the use of natural resources.

- We use the organisation's resources **properly and with care**.
- We want to **minimize any negative social or ecological impact** of our activities and ensure that our procurement policy is respecting principles of ecological and social justice, including respect for workers' women's and children's rights.
- We prefer and promote **collective solutions** e.g. sharing, public services, collective transport etc.
- We value **modesty in our spending** and actively avoid wasting resources, including energy.
- We prefer **biological, vegetarian and locally produced food** during our activities.
- We reduce waste in our office and during our activities and, where possible, we prefer to reuse and recycle resources.
- We try to maintain a reasonable level of **financial independence**, especially from funding sources that do not explicitly share our values or are seeking collaboration in furtherance of their commercial interests.
- We **do not tolerate fraud or corruption** and also expect our partners to take the necessary measures to prevent the misuse of resources.

## 3. Our partnerships

In Belgium and Europe, we are part of a broader social movement and show our support to social struggles that are in line with our vision and values. We also encourage our staff and sympathizers to share these concerns and support the struggles of the trade unions and the broader social movement.

We are working with partners who have similar values and who share our theory of change. We prioritize long term partnerships and build relationships of trust with partners. They are characterized by dialogue and transparency and decision are taken after concertation. We try to maintain partnerships on equal footing with both sides respecting their respective duties and responsibilities. We involve partners in strategic and operational decision making.

## 4. Our communication and use of information

We are communicating a sense of optimism and a belief that **another world is possible** and that societal change is necessary. We are showing concrete alternatives and alternative development models. We take sides and don't invoke neutrality in social issues.

In communication, we show **respect for the dignity** of our partners and target groups and allow them to decide how they want to be portrayed. Our communication reflects our vision on gender equality and diversity.

Our communication allows for our **active dialogue** with our social base and actively seeks their feedback.

**Transparency** is important to us and therefore we are as open as possible about our own activities. Nevertheless, we do not put the organisation, nor any partners or individuals, in jeopardy through the information we share with others. When we are not able to disclose certain information (e.g: issues of privacy, security,...) we explain the reasons why. For us, transparency is not only important towards our target groups and donors but also towards our partners.

## 5. Roles and procedures

Viva Salud's director serves both as the safeguarding officer and advisor. Isabelle Vanbrabant, who is a members of the board, serves as the complaints manager.

The safeguarding officer should make sure that safeguarding is taken seriously throughout the organisation, that the code of conduct is known and actively used and that procedures are applied. This role is mainly preventive.

The safeguarding advisor is the one who coordinates all the different aspects of safeguarding and ensures that the different roles are assigned to people within the organisation.

The complaints manager detects problems or receives complaints and ensures an adequate follow up.

Anyone can contact the complaints manager through [safeguarding@vivasalud.be](mailto:safeguarding@vivasalud.be) . She

- will hear the complainant and investigate the complaint;
- will decide how serious the complaint is and what follow up is adequate;
- will make sure all parties involved are heard in case the complaint is acted upon;
- will ensure that staff or volunteers have access to assistance by trade union representatives;
- will propose action including sanctions or referral to competent authorities if appropriate;
- will report to the board on any complaint he or she has received.