

oikos

cooperação e desenvolvimento



**| CODE OF ETHICAL
CONDUCT**

ETHICAL

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

The conduct of Oikos members and employees is governed by the Oikos code of ethical conduct, which covers the entire organization (headquarters, representations, projects in countries), as well as relationships with partners, funders, beneficiaries, and other identified stakeholders.

As Oikos is an organization whose actions are based on a human rights approach, we assume that these rights correspond to a universal code that should guide our standards of behavior, our commitments, and our actions. Human rights are inherent to all human beings regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other condition. Human rights are governed by the principles of universality, interdependence, indivisibility, equality, and non-discrimination. They are codified in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

In addition, and in order to enable greater operationalization in terms of the conduct of the organization and its employees and other parties involved, this code is based on instruments considered to be guidelines and references in the NGDO Sector, namely:

- Charter of European NGDOs;
- Code of Conduct of the Portuguese Platform of NGDOs;
- Code of Conduct for Emergency Humanitarian Aid, Portugal;
- Code of Conduct for Disaster Relief (Red Cross and Red Crescent);
- Code of Conduct on Images and Messages about Developing Countries, DOCHAS, Ireland.

In order to better operationalize our actions and good organizational practices, this code takes into account the Principles of Action Development of Oikos (PDA – Oikos), in force since the General Assembly of December 20, 2006, which we will now outline and describe.

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1. RULES OF CONDUCT TO GUIDE THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF EMPLOYEES

1.1. CONSISTENCY AND TRANSPARENCY

Oikos employees undertake to:

- acting in a manner consistent with the Organization's objectives, principles, and values, both internally and in their activities with beneficiary communities, or in their relationships with stakeholders (members, donors, funders, partners, service providers, public entities, other civil society organizations, academia, companies).
- All decisions and practices of employees must be based on clear rules that are consistent with Oikos' principles and values, going beyond strict compliance with legal obligations and their application.
- Consistency also implies acting with sincerity, honesty, and transparency in our relationships with all those who work with us, performing assigned tasks honestly, faithfully, and efficiently, with mutual respect, and towards our various *stakeholders*.
- All members and employees are responsible for complying with the Code of Conduct and complementary Safeguarding Policies within their teams. This responsibility extends to the obligation to inform their supervisor or superiors, including the Executive Board or the Board of Directors, as specifically defined in a specific policy, of any verifiable breach of this code and related policies.
- In addition, Oikos members and

employees must behave in a manner consistent with the following commitments of the Organization:

- **Impartiality** – renounce any discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social class; promote diversity and social, economic, cultural, and gender equality within our teams, partnerships, and in the context of our work with communities as vital conditions for the affirmation of human rights.
- **Neutrality** – fostering political, ethnic, religious, and ideological neutrality and not favoring or taking sides with any of the parties involved in hostilities.
- **Independence** – ensuring that our conduct does not jeopardize Oikos' independence and autonomy at the political, religious, financial, or sectoral level, by not exerting any kind of constraint or pressure on colleagues, volunteers, partners, funders, donors, public and private entities, and beneficiaries for reasons of ideological, political, religious, economic, or cultural choices.
- **Integrity** – maintaining integrity in our personal and professional conduct in all our activities, avoiding the emergence of unclear boundaries between our specific interests and the interests of Oikos and its beneficiaries. Integrity also implies:
 - **respect for internal regulations and procedures, as well as for the legislation** in force applicable to all aspects of our work and in each of the countries in which we operate.
 - In the exercise of our duties and with the means at our disposal and to the extent of our responsibilities, we must **ensure reliable records** of our activity, as well as inventory and logistics, accounting, financial, tax, environmental impact, safety, and human resources management records that fall within our purview.

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- Proactively contribute to the **identification and correction of flaws** and improvements in management systems, not taking advantage of any flaws that may exist for personal gain.

1.2. EXERCISE OF POWER

Oikos members and employees must:

- Exercise their functions and authority within the framework provided for in the terms of reference attached to their contract and in compliance with the legitimate guidelines of their hierarchical supervisors.
- The representation of the Organization, as well as the exercise of authority over teams or third parties, must not be carried out outside the mandates conferred upon them, never exceeding the delegation of powers conferred upon them and in strict compliance with the statutory rules, decisions of the General Assembly, and internal regulations approved by the Board of Directors in the exercise of its powers.
- The exercise of authority and power must be carried out correctly, avoiding abuses of power. Abuse of power is understood to mean the actual abuse or attempt to take advantage of one's personal position to obtain sexual or psychological satisfaction, to receive favors from another person with less power, such as situations in which the abuser takes monetary, social, or political advantage of another person through their exploitation.
- The provisions of the code of conduct regarding the prevention of abuse of power and authority are complemented and clarified by Oikos' Policy on the Prevention and Combating of Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, and Child Abuse.

1.3. LOYALTY

Oikos members and employees must:

- Behave loyally and dedicatedly in all their activities, respecting the commitments made to the Organization, including other employees, safeguarding the trust placed in them, the prestige and credibility of Oikos and its teams.
- Refrain from making or reproducing statements or engaging in behavior that could jeopardize the reputation or good name of the Organization, other members and collaborators of the organization, and third parties related to it.
- Critical statements should be made in a spirit of loyalty, internally, and with the aim of bringing about continuous improvement.
- In cases where legitimate personal rights or the rights of third parties are at risk, accusatory or denunciatory statements should be made within the formal framework established for this purpose in the Organization's safeguard policies, or in the legal forums provided for this purpose.

1.4. DILIGENCE AND CARE

Oikos members and employees must be aware of their individual responsibility in building and executing Oikos' mission, acting responsibly and in a manner that fulfills the duties assigned to them, guiding their actions toward achieving the objectives, results, and impacts of the projects and initiatives in which they are involved. This implies:

- Performing duties with diligence and efficiency, respecting the duties assigned to them, adopting a collaborative attitude towards colleagues and subordinates, and taking responsibility for their own performance and that of their work teams.

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- Rigorous performance of duties and diligence in protecting the assets, resources, and property of the Organization, partner entities, and funders.
- Ensure that the performance of your duties and tasks is not merely a contractual obligation, but rather is geared towards benefiting the communities and beneficiaries we work with, and towards achieving the Organization's social mission and the objectives, results, and impacts envisaged in its projects.
- Foster a proactive and leadership attitude, proposing improvements and innovation, and creating space for colleagues and subordinates to share the same positive and proactive attitude.

1.5. OTHER RULES OF DILIGENT AND RESPECTFUL PERSONAL CONDUCT

The ethical conduct of Oikos members and employees should not be limited to the professional exercise of their activities, but it is also necessary to maintain diligent and appropriate personal conduct, namely:

- Behaving in private in a manner consistent with the principles and values upheld by the organization.
- Showing an attitude of respect for the religious beliefs and traditions of the country in which they work;
- Maintaining personal hygiene and health in the workplace, as well as wearing appropriate clothing in accordance with local customs and conventions, conveying a professional image at all times;
- It should be noted that Oikos' duty of neutrality extends to its members and employees, not only in official communications, but also in private communications and messages, avoiding mentioning confidential internal information about Oikos' work, political or military situations in the mission location, to unauthorized third parties. This rule is valid 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, for expatriate employees. Exceptions to the rule are made for local staff (citizens who work for Oikos in their country of origin or where they have acquired nationality and primary residence and exercise full citizenship rights, such as the right to vote and to be elected) in the exercise of their citizenship and rights. Nevertheless, all employees are required to exercise discretion whenever taking a position, even if private, could endanger the life and safety of co-workers (within Oikos or partners) and/or Oikos' license to operate.
- Dealing with personal issues in such a way as not to participate in activities that could cause harm to the Organization, its assets, its social mission, or the communities and beneficiaries we support.
- Refrain from any activity or transaction, or from acquiring any position or function, paid or unpaid, that is incompatible with the diligent performance of duties, or that could cause serious financial or reputational damage to Oikos.
- Avoiding any private affiliation with a political organization, religious denomination, private or corporate society that could influence or interfere with the Organization's duty of political neutrality and autonomy.
- Diligent personal conduct extends to the absence of risky or violent behavior:
- Oikos members and employees must refrain from possessing and carrying weapons, even in unsafe situations, except when the employee is performing security services for which they are legally qualified and duly covered by a plan formally approved by Oikos's representation in the country and by the Executive Board at headquarters.

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- Oikos members and employees must refrain from violent conduct and, in situations of insecurity, such as armed conflict and insurgency, must comply with the guidelines of the

security Plans established for this purpose under the guidance of the respective Oikos Country Office and Headquarters.

- Oikos members and employees must respect the prohibition on the use of hard or soft drugs, even in cases where they are legally and socially tolerated in the country in which they operate.
- They must also refrain from driving or performing any other duties under the influence of alcohol.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- The members of the Governing Bodies, other members, and employees of Oikos must act transparently, avoiding conflicts of interest, both internally and in their relations with third parties, namely by refraining from arbitrating cases from which they may derive benefits.
- In the event of a conflict, or potential conflict, between individual interests and the interests of Oikos, its members, or *stakeholders*, the conflict shall be resolved transparently, in accordance with the interests of the Organization and its *stakeholders*.
- Job vacancies at Oikos shall be filled on the basis of merit, according to previously established and transparent Terms of Reference, and only after evaluation of all applications received, both internally and externally;
- Recruitment, hiring, and purchasing processes shall be conducted in a fair, objective, and impartial manner, in accordance with this code and the Procurement and *Purchasing* policy;
- Family members, friends, or organizations with which the employee or their family are associated will not receive preferential treatment, in accordance with this code and the anti-corruption and fraud policy.
- No discounts, offers, favors, or advantages that may influence or appear to influence the performance of a function or decision

are offered or accepted, either directly or indirectly.

3. ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AND CORRUPTION

Oikos members and employees must strive to combat all forms and practices of corruption, as well as condemn and avoid all acts that represent illicit benefits, which undermine the principles and values of the Organization and the trust that funders, donors, beneficiary communities, and other stakeholders have legitimately placed in it. Therefore, Oikos members and employees are expressly prohibited from:

- Allowing themselves to be bribed or bribing third parties,
- fraudulent and malicious behavior,
- illicit schemes or schemes created in bad faith to obtain gains for themselves, their family members, colleagues, friends, or the Organization itself.

Without prejudice to the provisions of this code of conduct, any member or employee must also take into account the anti-corruption and fraud policy for greater complementarity and detail to the provisions of this document.

4. RIGOR, EFFICIENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Rigor in analyzing needs, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources, accuracy and transparency in reporting our activities to various *stakeholders* and

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beneficiaries in a timely manner are essential to the fulfillment of Oikos' mission, the credibility of the organization, and the maintenance of the trust of all those who legitimately place their trust in it.

Oikos members and employees must ensure that:

- Funding, donations, and other revenues made available to Oikos are used only in pursuit of the organization's objectives and are managed with prudence, rigor, and efficiency.
- Embezzlement, destruction, or misappropriation of funds or assets belonging to Oikos, its funders, partners, or beneficiaries is expressly prohibited and constitutes a serious crime to be reported through the channels provided for in Oikos' Anti-Corruption Policy by any member or collaborator who becomes aware of any such occurrences.
- Oikos members and employees must, within the scope of their duties, cooperate and ensure the quality and rigor of internal control and audit systems.
- All members and employees must make every effort to ensure that all of the organization's activities are recorded and documented accurately and in full compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Members and employees must ensure that their teams:
- Maintain accurate documents and reports, available for verification, with correct and fair information on all financial transactions, without parallel accounting records;
- Maintain internal control systems and cooperate with internal and external auditors in order to maintain adequate prevention against fraud and corruption practices.
- They cooperate with supervisors, national representatives, and the Executive Board in institutional, technical, and financial reporting on the organization's activities,

particularly with regard to the timely annual consolidation of accounts, official auditing, and publication and dissemination of the Annual Report and Accounts to stakeholders.

- Oikos members and employees:
 - Must not incur any obligation on behalf of the Organization without having the proper written authorization or delegation of powers to do so, in strict compliance with the statutory rules, decisions of the General Assembly, and internal regulations approved by the Board of Directors in the exercise of its powers.
- Shall not accept any gifts in kind, except for symbolic gifts that are donated within the framework of established local traditions and whose non-acceptance would be considered an offense or disrespect, and shall still inform their superiors.

The provisions of this Code regarding internal control, accountability, and prevention of fraud and corruption are supplemented by related safeguard policies, in particular the Risk Assessment Policy and the Policy on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Fraud.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Oikos members and employees must act with respect for all parties involved in their activities, refraining from irresponsibly disclosing information that could constitute a mere unjustified attack on other parties, whether individuals or groups. In particular, it is essential that everyone:

- Be especially discreet with regard to processes that carry a high social stigma, protecting the identity and preserving the dignity and good name of the people involved.
- Exercise due diligence to ensure that they do not violate the rules of

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confidentiality, privacy, or intellectual property rights of the organization or third parties, including partners, funders, and service providers, seeking to comply with the rules of access to information and knowledge in applicable contracts, agreements, and internal regulations.

- The processing of personal data to which members and/or employees have access in the performance of their duties shall be carried out in compliance with Regulation (EU) No. 679/2016 of April 27 – General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union (GDPR) and Law No. 58/2019 of August 8, as well as any legislation and regulations that may at any time repeal or amend the aforementioned legal instruments.
- The personal data in question shall be processed and recorded only to the extent strictly necessary for the performance of the Institution's legitimate activities.

However, any information that:

- Is or becomes public knowledge;
- Is required by law or in the context of investigations of reports or complaints, in accordance with the relevant safeguard policies, namely the Policy on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Fraud, as well as the Policy on Preventing and Combating Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, and Child Abuse.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES AND VOLUNTEERS

Oikos works with human resources in different ways: paid and volunteer, full-time and part-time, in Portugal and abroad. In all situations, Oikos members and employees must respect and enforce the legal requirements set out in the labor legislation of the countries where it

operates.

In Oikos' relationship with its human resources, both paid and volunteer, and in the relationship between them, everyone must ensure that:

- all people are treated with mutual respect and consideration;
- communication is open and correct, in order to ensure mutual assistance in the fulfillment of tasks and responsibilities;
- the privacy of each colleague, stakeholder, and beneficiary is respected with regard to personal information;
- information is made available to all employees on the organization's complementary and additional policies, organized by topics relevant and pertinent to their daily work and activities;
- adequate information is made available to any employee regarding decisions that may affect them;
- Oikos' relationships are not used to obtain or request favors or benefits for your private life;
- recruitment processes must be transparent, without any discrimination based on gender, origin, religion, social status, or political affiliation. They are carried out after defining the Terms of Reference and, at a minimum, through an open, publicly advertised application process, with selection based on curriculum vitae and human and technical profile, using interviews, with decision-making shared by more than one person in charge;
- work actions and decisions are not unduly influenced by the future possibility of another job.

7. COMMUNICATION AND FUNDRAISING

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7.1. COMMUNICATION

Communication in an organization such as Oikos has three fundamental objectives, namely: i) to publicize the work of the NGOs in an objective, transparent, and educational manner; ii) to mobilize citizens, philanthropic entities, and institutional donors to support development, publicizing the needs and specific thematic, geographical, and cultural issues with which we work; and iii) promoting social transformation.

In any case, we understand communication as a public service, seeking to dispel myths and prejudices surrounding development issues, clarifying the complexity of the root causes of the constraints we encounter (inequalities, global environmental changes, latent or explicit conflicts) and mobilizing for transformative action. In this sense, communication must be consistent with the values and principles of development that guide all of Oikos' activities.

Specifically, and in line with the guidance contained in the Code of Conduct of the Portuguese Platform of NGOs, Oikos members and collaborators, especially those whose functions are particularly relevant in the field of communication and marketing, must ensure that:

- Communication is guided by three essential principles: i) recognition of the need to promote social justice and solidarity; ii) respect for the dignity of the people involved;
- iii) the principle of equality for all people.
- The choice of images and messages is a sensitive issue and should be based on the values of respect for equality, solidarity, and social justice. The image chosen must, first and foremost, provide a true representation of the situation it is intended to illustrate, avoiding the exploitation of third parties, particularly beneficiaries, the distortion of reality, or false interpretations of reality.
- Avoiding the use of images and messages that promote stereotypes, sensationalism, or discrimination against people, situations, or places is a basic requirement for consistency in communication.
- An essential requirement is the use of images, messages, and case studies with full information, understanding, participation, and authorization from the people who may be portrayed in them, informing both those people and the partners or other organizations involved of the purposes for which they are intended. It is therefore essential to guarantee those whose situation is being portrayed an opportunity to communicate and give direct testimony about their own stories, ensuring that the communities themselves play a leading role.
- The implementation of these guidelines requires:
 - defining and recording whether the people portrayed wish to be expressly identified and acting accordingly, using appropriate captions for images, videos, or narrated messages;
 - Ensuring compliance with standards related to human rights and the protection of vulnerable persons;
 - ensuring compliance with standards relating to children's rights, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, when children are represented;
 - Respect the Oikos Communication Standards, Recommendations, or Procedures Manual and/or that of each specific project, paying particular attention to the requirements of the respective funders and partners;
 - Respect and enforce respect for the intellectual property rights of all content used in Oikos communications or provided by the organization to third parties, identifying the authors of the various content.

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7.2. FUNDRAISING

Oikos, its members, and employees must be vigilant in ensuring that no funding or donations are accepted that could compromise the organization's autonomy in pursuing its mission.

- The acceptance of any donations or funding from illicit sources, or from money laundering, is explicitly prohibited, both under applicable law and under this code of conduct.
- Members and collaborators involved in communication, marketing, and fundraising activities must avoid the use of inappropriate communication and image content or content that undermines the dignity of beneficiaries or third parties in the pursuit of greater fundraising effectiveness.
- Oikos members and employees must ensure that:
 - the results of fundraising campaigns are publicly disclosed;
 - the use of funding and donations is carried out efficiently;
 - the results and impacts of their application are disclosed in a transparent and accurate manner.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

Oikos' governing bodies actively ensure that all internal procedures and policies are consistent with this code;

Copies of this code will be provided to each employee (paid or unpaid) and to volunteers, whenever relevant;

The Code will be attached to all new employment contracts and also signed by the parties;

The Code of Conduct, as well as the complementary Principles of Action Development and Safeguarding Policies, will be incorporated into the internal

training content for employees;

Violation of this Code of Conduct will result in sanctions.

The Code is complemented and explained by a set of more specific safeguard policies in force at Oikos, namely:

- Policy on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Fraud
- Policy on Prevention and Combating Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, and Child Abuse
- Human Rights Policy
- Gender Equality Policy
- *Procurement* Policy
- *Risk Assessment* Policy
- Other policies and safeguards that may be approved by Oikos' governing bodies and appended to this Code.

8.1. INTERPRETATION AND COMPLAINTS

Any questions regarding the interpretation, application, or suspected violation of the code should be brought to the attention of

the Executive Board, the Board of Directors, or the Supervisory Committee.

No one may be discriminated against or reprimanded for reporting situations or requesting clarification regarding the Code of Conduct, whether or not these issues are valid or substantial.

The mechanisms for filing complaints, reports, protection, and redress are set out in the specific safeguard policies listed in the previous paragraph.

8.2. ADDENDUMS

Addenda to the Code must be approved by the Oikos Governing Board.



Oikos – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento is a non-profit association, internationally recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization for Development. We believe in a world without poverty and injustice, where human development is equitable and sustainable on a local and global scale. Therefore, we have taken on the mission of eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities so that all people can enjoy the right to a dignified life.

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