

SiKanda's Code of Conduct for working with children and adolescents

This Code is part of SiKanda's Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. These are the basic and imperative work standards for staff, volunteers, external workshop participants, media, guests, donors, partners, collaborators, contractors and other parties who have contact with children and adolescents through the organization's activities. Such **persons must at all times adhere to the code of conduct in their interaction with children and adolescents**. Once you have reviewed the code of conduct, please sign the letter of commitment that will be provided with this guide.

Any person may report an offense or violation of the code of conduct to the organization. The code sets out the basic guidelines for working with children. SiKanda is obligated to act to rectify such behaviour and so would terminate the employment relationship with the offending person or initiate legal proceedings, depending on the case.

To report an incident, please contact:

Janett Garcia
Child Protection Focal Point
proteccion@sikanda.org
T.: (+52) 951 144 39 65

Find the Letter of commitment in the last page of the document.

Acceptable practices and behaviour towards children and adolescents:

- Create an environment in which they are valued, encouraged and respected.
- Listen empathetically and speak respectfully.
- Encourage their ongoing participation in decision making.
- Encourage them to feel safe, happy and to have fun during activities.
- Encourage and inform the children of their right to bodily autonomy.
- Encourage them to express their feelings, fears and experiences freely and let them know they are in a safe environment to do so.
- Respect their private and personal space. When doing any activity, make sure that two adults are present and visible at all times.
- Be sensitive to the fact that there are those who may be more vulnerable and have particular needs.
- Report any suspected or known act of abuse.
- Encourage a violence-free environment at all times.
- Respect at all times the rights of the children and their families.
- **Respect the communication guidelines of this policy (Use of Imagery. Photos and videos with children and adolescents)**

Unacceptable behaviour towards children and adolescents:

Avoid:

- Behaviour or language that could negatively influence or set a bad example such as smoking, drinking alcoholic drinks or consuming some type of psychoactive substance in the work environment, premises or during working hours.
- Making sexually suggestive comments, even in a joking manner.
- Disrespectful behaviour towards the environment which could set a bad example, such as littering or burning garbage.
- Being alone with children or adolescents for a prolonged period of time, unless strictly justified for work or emergency reasons.
- Touching or making gestures that could be misinterpreted by children or third parties.
- Doing things that the children or adolescents are capable of doing themselves and that violate their right to privacy and intimacy, such as grooming or undressing them.
- Favouring someone over another or others.

Never

- Exercise any type of violence or physical punishment nor threaten to do so.
- Employ children or adolescents as domestic workers or to do any other type of work.
- Allow children or adolescents in your home unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Spend the night alone in the same room as a child or adolescent.

- Subject a child or adolescent to any type of psychological abuse or degrading treatment such as insulting, yelling, humiliating, mocking, ridiculing them in front of others, intimidating, threatening, frightening, harassing, blackmailing or any other type of situation or action that could cause harm.
- Express any offensive or discriminatory comment on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, culture, age, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, opinion, language, economic position, or any other factor that could be subject to discrimination.
- Make any kind of sexual advances or subject a child or adolescent to sexual abuse; real or simulated, including sexual abuse or rape, forcing them to touch you, exposing them to pornographic acts, images, or literature, making inappropriate advances, etc.
- Engage in sexual relations with children or adolescents.
- Allow any child or adult to engage in any of the acts described above. If you are aware of this happening, you are obliged to report it according to the protocol established in this policy.
- Meet with children or adolescents participating in the projects outside working hours and/or activities.
- Provide your personal e-mail or personal telephone number to children or adolescents, you must use the communication channels provided by the organization.
- Stay in a hotel that is directly or indirectly complicit in commercial sexual violence against children or adolescents.
- Ask for favours or money from children or adolescents participating in the projects.
- Make false promises or provide false information.
- Share private information about children or adolescents participating in the projects.

Use of Imagery. Photos and videos with children and adolescents:

Images are powerful. They tell us stories about the people and places with which we work. People, particularly children and adolescents, have rights over the use of their images.

The **Social Media Guide for Volunteers and Travellers** helps us to reflect on what messages our images convey. So, before taking a photo or video, follow these four essential guidelines:

1. **Promote dignity:** avoid taking photos that violate people's rights, foster pity or spread misinformation.
2. **Obtain informed consent:** permission is required from the child/adolescent and their parents or teachers for photographs to be taken.
3. **Question the intentions of the photograph:** would you take the photograph if you were in another context? Would you let an unknown person take this photograph of a child in your family?
4. **Avoid stereotyping and let people be the protagonist of their own story:** if you're going to take photos, make it so the main characters are the people themselves, complexify their context and show their capacity for transformation and action.

The recipients of this code shall:

- Obtain informed consent from children and adolescents as well as their parents or guardians, about the possible use of their image for the purposes of communication and dissemination of the activities.
- Understand that children and adolescents as well as their guardians may withdraw their consent at any time regarding the use of their image.
- Ensure that the images represent the children and adolescents in a dignified and respectful way. Avoid generalisations, sensationalism and sentimentalism. A balanced view of the life and circumstances of each child and adolescent should be shown, highlighting they are agents of change.

- Avoid all content (texts and images) that may degrade, victimize and/or embarrass children or adolescents.
- **Ensure that any image to be published in which a child appears does not show their face** (preferably side shots, from behind, or using a filter to cover the person's face).
- Not share an image or video obtained in the context of Sikanda's work on social media without the expressed authorization of the child or adolescent and their parent or guardian.
- Under no circumstances use images where children and adolescents are sexualised or where they are in poses that can be interpreted as sexually suggestive. Consideration should be given to how images may be interpreted in different cultural contexts.
- Promote the use of watermarking on images showing children and adolescents on social networks to prevent their misuse.
- Media, visitors, donors and Sikanda consultants should follow the recommendations when documenting their field visits.
- External photographers and media should be accompanied at all times by SiKanda staff and should never be alone with children and adolescents.
- Avoid publishing data that would reveals the location and full identification of children and adolescents, including geolocation data. Pseudonyms shall be used in their testimonies and it shall be explained at the bottom of the page that it is for the protection of children and adolescents.
- Avoid decontextualized photos. It should always be made explicit the person who's being photographed connection to the work of the organization. Likewise, whenever possible, specify the source, authorship and date of the image.
- Avoid reinforcing traditional gender roles through messages or audio-visual material.
- Use language in accordance with the rights of children and adolescents. Promote the use of non-sexist language.
- During interviews or videotaping, children and adolescents shall not be coerced to obtain certain testimonies or images. Create an environment in which they feel comfortable and feel free to express themselves.
- Avoid using the image of children and adolescents that present them in a dehumanizing manner.

Letter of commitment

DATE: MM/DD/YYYY

I,..... acknowledge that I have read SiKanda´s **Code of Conduct for working with Children and Adolescents** and I have understood its guidelines and procedures.

I declare that I agree with the Policy, Code of Conduct and Information Procedures.

I commit to comply with the guidelines of the Policy and Code of Conduct, in doing so try to generate at all times a safe, harmonious and positive environment for children and adolescents with whom SiKanda works, respecting their dignity and rights.

I understand that it is my responsibility to adhere to the terms of the Protection Policy to avoid actions that involve abuse or violence to children and adolescents or that may be interpreted as such.

I understand that failure to comply with the Policy, Code of Conduct or Reporting Procedures may result in termination of my relationship with SiKanda and possibly criminal prosecution.

Name _____

Signature _____