



hdri
Human Development
Research Initiative

CODE OF CONDUCT

Standards of Conduct, Integrity, and Ethics

Adopted by the Board of Directors pursuant to Article 31 of the HDRI Statutes

Paris, France



Human Development Research Initiative (HDRI)

50 Rue des Tournelles, 75003 Paris, France

Registration Number: W751275674

EU TRN: 892689452279-12

info@hdevri.org | www.hdevri.org

PREAMBLE

A code of conduct is, at bottom, a promise an organisation makes to the people who make up its community, members, Board members, staff, interns, research fellows, volunteers, and partners, about how they will treat one another and how the organisation will conduct itself in the world. This Code of Conduct (the 'Code') is HDRI's version of that promise, adopted by the Board of Directors under the authority conferred by Article 31 of HDRI's Statutes (the 'Statutes'), and giving full and detailed effect to the general obligation, already placed on every member by Article 11 of the Statutes, to support HDRI's mission and values and to refrain from conduct that could bring the Organisation into disrepute.

HDRI exists to conduct rigorous, independent policy research and advocacy on some of the most consequential issues of our time, climate and environment, migration and security, global health, gender equity, economic and social rights, and civic space and the rule of law. An organisation that asks governments and institutions to act with integrity has no credibility unless it holds itself, and everyone who acts in its name, to the same standard. That is the premise on which this Code rests.

This Code is not a list of prohibitions to be read once and forgotten. It describes the standards HDRI expects as a matter of course, the boundaries it will not allow to be crossed, and the channels available to anyone who believes those standards have not been met. It applies equally, and without exception for seniority or length of service, to the President of HDRI and to the newest volunteer.

This Code supplements, and is to be read together with, the Statutes and HDRI's Rules of Procedure. Where those instruments already address a matter, for example, the declaration of conflicts of interest by Board members under Article 33 of the Statutes, or the data protection principles set out in Article 34 of the Statutes and Article 32 of the Rules of Procedure, this Code does not repeat their legal machinery but builds on it, translating it into the everyday standards of behaviour expected of everyone at HDRI.

This is the final and consolidated version of HDRI's Code of Conduct and supersedes and replaces, in its entirety, any previous version, draft, or informal statement of conduct standards previously in circulation.

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TITLE I — GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1 — Purpose and Legal Basis

This Code is adopted by the Board of Directors pursuant to Article 31 of the Statutes, which authorises the Board to adopt codes of conduct for members and Board members as part of HDRI's internal regulations. Its purpose is to set out, in clear and practical terms, the standards of conduct, integrity, and ethics expected of every person acting in HDRI's name, and the means by which those standards are upheld.

Article 2 — Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, '**Covered Person**' means any member, Board member, Advisory Board member, employee, intern, research fellow, volunteer, consultant, or other person acting on behalf of or in association with HDRI, in any capacity and regardless of whether that involvement is paid or unpaid, occasional or permanent.

Terms defined in the Statutes or in HDRI's Rules of Procedure and used in this Code without separate definition carry the meaning given to them there.

Article 3 — Scope of Application

This Code applies to every Covered Person, at all times when they are acting on behalf of HDRI or identifying themselves as connected with HDRI, including at HDRI events, in research and field activities, in online and social media conduct undertaken in that capacity, and in dealings with donors, partners, public authorities, and the media.

Certain provisions of this Code, in particular those concerning respect, non-discrimination, and confidentiality, also govern a Covered Person's conduct toward other Covered Persons outside the immediate context of an HDRI activity, where that conduct has a real and demonstrable connection to their involvement with HDRI or its community.

Article 4 — Relationship with the Statutes and the Rules of Procedure

This Code is subordinate to the Statutes and is to be read consistently with them and with HDRI's Rules of Procedure. Where a matter is regulated by the Statutes or the Rules of Procedure in a manner more specific than this Code, for example, the procedure for the expulsion of a member, or the financial authorisation thresholds applicable to expenditure, that more specific provision governs the procedure to be followed, while this Code continues to state the underlying standard of conduct.

In the event of any genuine conflict between this Code and the Statutes, the Statutes prevail, in accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes.



TITLE II — CORE VALUES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Article 5 — Core Values

HDRI's institutional identity rests on three core values — Dialogue, Research, and Development — and three standing principles — Inclusivity, Integrity, and Innovation. Every Covered Person is expected to give practical effect to these values in their conduct: to engage in good faith and constructive dialogue even where views differ; to pursue and defend factual accuracy and methodological rigour in all research and advocacy work; and to support the professional development of colleagues, interns, and fellows as a genuine institutional priority rather than a matter of form.

Article 6 — General Standards of Professional Conduct

Every Covered Person shall act honestly, treat others with courtesy and respect, and exercise reasonable care and diligence in carrying out any responsibility entrusted to them by HDRI. A Covered Person shall not misrepresent their role, authority, or affiliation with HDRI, whether to members, donors, partners, public authorities, or the public.

Article 7 — Political and Institutional Independence

In accordance with Article 5 of the Statutes, HDRI is not affiliated with any political party, religious organisation, or commercial enterprise, and maintains its independence in all research, advocacy, and public communications. A Covered Person acting on HDRI's behalf shall not use that role to advance a personal political affiliation, and shall take care to distinguish, in any public statement, between HDRI's institutional position and their own personal views.

Article 8 — Intellectual Integrity and Research Ethics

All research conducted under HDRI's name shall be honest, methodologically sound, and properly sourced. A Covered Person involved in research or publications shall not fabricate or falsify data, misrepresent findings, plagiarise the work of others, or suppress results because they are inconvenient to a particular advocacy position. Where a research output draws on the work, data, or ideas of a third party, that source shall be properly and visibly acknowledged.

A Covered Person who becomes aware of a genuine error in a published HDRI output has a duty to report it to the Publications and Research Director, so that a correction can be considered and, where warranted, issued.



TITLE III — RESPECT, NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND ANTI-HARASSMENT

Article 9 — Equality and Non-Discrimination

HDRI is committed to a community in which every person is treated with dignity and without discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, political opinion, or any other characteristic protected under applicable French, European, or international law. This commitment applies to admission to membership, appointment to office, recruitment of staff, interns, and volunteers, and to the day-to-day conduct of HDRI's activities.

Article 10 — Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying

HDRI does not tolerate harassment, bullying, or intimidation of any kind, whether based on a protected characteristic or otherwise. Harassment includes, without limitation, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature; derogatory remarks or jokes directed at a person's identity or background; deliberate exclusion or humiliation; and the abuse of a position of seniority or influence to pressure another Covered Person, whether in person, in writing, or through electronic communication.

A Covered Person who experiences or witnesses conduct of this kind is encouraged, and shall in no way be penalised, for raising it through the channels described in Article 26 of this Code.

Article 11 — Safeguarding at Events and Field Activities

Where HDRI organises or participates in events, workshops, or field research involving young people, vulnerable populations, or participants unfamiliar with the local context, the Board shall ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, including a clearly identified point of contact for concerns during the activity and, where the nature of the activity warrants it, a basic risk assessment carried out in advance.

TITLE IV — CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Article 12 — Conflicts of Interest

A Covered Person shall avoid situations in which their personal, financial, or professional interests could reasonably be seen to conflict with the interests of HDRI, and shall disclose any such situation promptly to the Board, in accordance with Article 33 of the Statutes and Article 27 of the Rules of Procedure. A Board member with a declared conflict on a given matter shall not participate in the deliberation or vote on that matter.



Article 13 – Gifts, Hospitality, and Inducements

A Covered Person shall not solicit or accept a gift, hospitality, or other benefit from any person or entity dealing with HDRI where doing so could reasonably be seen as an attempt to influence the performance of their functions, in accordance with Article 28 of the Rules of Procedure. Gifts of nominal value received in a professional context need not be declined but should be reported to the Secretary General.

Article 14 – Financial Integrity

A Covered Person handling HDRI funds shall do so honestly, transparently, and strictly within the financial authorisation thresholds and procedures set out in Title V of the Rules of Procedure. Falsifying an expense claim, misusing HDRI funds or property for personal benefit, or circumventing an authorisation requirement constitutes serious misconduct.

Article 15 – Anti-Bribery and Corruption

No Covered Person shall offer, give, solicit, or accept a bribe or other improper payment or advantage, whether directly or through a third party, in connection with any HDRI activity, grant application, procurement decision, or dealing with a public official or private counterparty. This prohibition applies regardless of local custom or practice and admits no exception, including for so-called facilitation payments.

Article 16 – Screening of Funds and Partners

HDRI shall exercise reasonable diligence before accepting a donation, grant, or partnership, to satisfy itself that the funds in question do not derive from unlawful activity and that the partner's activities and affiliations are not manifestly incompatible with HDRI's values and independence, as contemplated by Article 8 of the Statutes. The President and Secretary General are jointly responsible for this diligence in respect of any funding arrangement exceeding the threshold set out in Article 20 of the Rules of Procedure.

TITLE V – CONFIDENTIALITY, INFORMATION, AND DATA PROTECTION

Article 17 – Confidentiality

A Covered Person shall keep confidential any non-public information obtained through their involvement with HDRI, including internal deliberations, unpublished research, donor and partner communications, and the personal data of other Covered Persons, and shall not disclose it except with proper authorisation or as required by law. This obligation survives the end of a person's involvement with HDRI.



Article 18 – Data Protection

HDRI processes personal data only for specified, lawful purposes and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), the Loi Informatique et Libertés, and Article 32 of the Rules of Procedure. A Covered Person who handles personal data in the course of their involvement with HDRI shall do so only for the purpose for which it was collected and shall take reasonable care to keep it secure.

Article 19 – Intellectual Property

Research, publications, and other works created by a Covered Person in the course of an HDRI activity belong to HDRI, unless otherwise agreed in writing, and shall be used, credited, and published in accordance with the editorial and attribution practices approved by the Publications and Research Director. A Covered Person shall respect the intellectual property rights of third parties in all HDRI work.

TITLE VI – PUBLIC CONDUCT, COMMUNICATIONS, AND USE OF THE HDRI NAME

Article 20 – Public Statements and Media

Only the President and the Communications Director, or a person they expressly authorise, may speak to the media or issue a public statement on HDRI's behalf, in accordance with Article 30 of the Rules of Procedure. A Covered Person who is contacted by a journalist or public body in connection with HDRI, and who is not so authorised, shall refer the enquiry to the Communications Director.

Article 21 – Social Media and Personal Conduct

A Covered Person who identifies themselves publicly, including on social media, as a member of or otherwise connected with HDRI shall ensure that their public conduct does not contradict HDRI's values or bring the Organisation into disrepute, and shall make reasonably clear, where relevant, that personal views expressed are their own and not HDRI's institutional position. This Article does not restrict a Covered Person's freedom to hold and express personal opinions in their private capacity.

Article 22 – Use of the HDRI Name, Brand, and Property

The name 'HDRI', the designation 'Human Development Research Initiative', and any associated logos, templates, or visual identity elements shall be used only in accordance with the brand guidelines approved by the Board and Article 31 of the Rules of Procedure. HDRI property, including equipment, accounts, and access credentials, shall be used only for legitimate HDRI purposes and returned promptly upon request or upon the end of a person's involvement with HDRI.



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TITLE VII — HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLBEING

Article 23 — Health and Safety

HDRI shall take reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of Covered Persons participating in its activities, including by identifying and communicating any foreseeable risk before an event, workshop, or field activity takes place. Every Covered Person shall take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others and shall comply with any safety instruction given in connection with an HDRI activity.

Article 24 — Substance Use

A Covered Person shall not attend an HDRI activity under the influence of alcohol or any substance to an extent that impairs their judgement or ability to act safely and professionally, nor shall they supply an illegal substance to another Covered Person in connection with any HDRI activity.

Article 25 — Duty of Care Toward Interns, Fellows, and Volunteers

HDRI recognises that interns, research fellows, and volunteers are often at an early stage of their professional lives and may occupy a position of relative vulnerability within the Organisation. Board members and staff supervising interns, fellows, or volunteers shall exercise their authority responsibly, provide constructive and fair supervision, and shall not use their position to extract work, favours, or conduct outside the scope of the individual's agreed engagement.

TITLE VIII — REPORTING, INVESTIGATION, AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 26 — Reporting Concerns

Any Covered Person who believes, in good faith, that this Code has been breached may report the matter in writing to the Secretary General or, where the concern involves the Secretary General or where the reporting person considers it more appropriate, directly to the President. HDRI shall, so far as practicable, make available a confidential channel of communication for this purpose and shall publicise it to all Covered Persons.

A report should describe, as far as possible, the conduct concerned, when and where it occurred, and any person able to corroborate it, but a report shall not be dismissed merely because it is incomplete or imprecise; the Board shall take such further steps as are reasonable to establish the facts.

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Article 27 – Protection Against Retaliation

HDRI shall not tolerate retaliation of any kind against a Covered Person who, in good faith, reports a concern under this Code, provides information in the course of an investigation, or otherwise raises a concern about conduct they reasonably believe to be inconsistent with this Code. A person found to have retaliated against another in this manner commits, in itself, a serious breach of this Code.

This protection does not extend to a report made maliciously or in the knowledge that it is false; the Board shall, however, treat every report as made in good faith unless and until it has reasonable grounds to conclude otherwise.

Article 28 – Investigation Procedure

On receipt of a report, the President (or, where the President is implicated or otherwise conflicted, the Secretary General or another Board member designated by the Board) shall determine, within a reasonable time, whether the matter warrants further investigation. Where an investigation is warranted, it shall be conducted by one or more Board members, or, where the Board considers it appropriate given the seriousness or sensitivity of the matter, by an external person of suitable standing appointed for that purpose.

The investigation shall be conducted proportionately, with reasonable regard for the privacy and dignity of everyone involved, and shall be documented in writing. Nothing in this Article displaces the specific procedure prescribed by Article 12 of the Statutes and Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure where the matter concerns the possible expulsion of a member, nor the procedure applicable to a Board member's removal under Article 17 of the Statutes.

Article 29 – Disciplinary Measures and Sanctions

Depending on the nature and seriousness of a substantiated breach of this Code, the Board may take such measures as it considers proportionate, including without limitation: an informal or formal warning; a requirement to complete relevant training; suspension from specific responsibilities, activities, or Board duties for a defined period; termination of an internship, fellowship, or volunteer arrangement; removal from a Board position, following the procedure set out in Article 17 of the Statutes; or expulsion from membership, following the procedure set out in Article 12 of the Statutes and Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure.

Where the conduct in question may also constitute a criminal offence under French law, the Board's handling of the matter under this Code is without prejudice to any person's right, or the Board's own discretion, to report the matter to the competent authorities.

Article 30 – Right to Be Heard and Appeal



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Before any disciplinary measure is imposed under this Code, other than an informal warning, the Covered Person concerned shall be informed of the substance of the allegation against them and given a fair opportunity to respond, whether in writing or, on request, orally before the Board. Where the disciplinary measure concerns the expulsion of a member or the removal of a Board member, the procedural safeguards set out in the Statutes and the Rules of Procedure for that specific measure shall apply in full, and this Article does not diminish them.

TITLE IX — FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 31 — Acknowledgement and Acceptance

Every Covered Person is deemed to have read, understood, and accepted this Code from the moment their membership, appointment, employment, or engagement with HDRI takes effect. The Board may, at its discretion, require certain categories of Covered Persons, in particular Board members, staff, interns, and research fellows, to sign a written acknowledgement of this Code as a condition of their engagement.

Article 32 — Amendment

This Code may be adopted, amended, or repealed at any time by a simple majority decision of the Board of Directors, in accordance with Article 31 of the Statutes. An amendment takes effect immediately upon adoption, unless the resolution specifies a later date, and shall be communicated to all Covered Persons within fifteen (15) days.

Article 33 — Entry into Force

This Code enters into force upon its adoption by the Board of Directors and remains in force, as amended from time to time, until repealed by a subsequent decision of the Board. It supersedes and replaces, in its entirety, any prior version of HDRI's Code of Conduct or equivalent statement of conduct standards.

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ADOPTION

This Code of Conduct, comprising Nine Titles and Thirty-Three Articles, was duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Human Development Research Initiative (HDRI) at a duly convened meeting, pursuant to Article 31 of the Statutes, and constitutes, from the date of its adoption, the Organisation's sole and complete Code of Conduct.

Gurgen Petrosyan

President of HDRI

Date: 11 September 2026

Signature:

Sofia Balas

Secretary General

Date: 11 September 2026

Signature:

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