

**DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS EQUITY AND DEVELOPMENT
(DARED)**

ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS CHARTER

Adopted 2025

Registered Office: Ngoketunjia, North West Region, Cameroon

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Preamble

Direct Action for Rights Equity and Development (DARED) exists to serve developing communities through the promotion of gender equality, human rights, equity, community development, arts, and culture, as set out in the Institution's Constitution. This Charter translates that mission into binding standards of conduct for every person who represents DARED — staff, volunteers, board members, technical advisers, consultants, interns, and partner-organisation personnel acting under DARED's name.

This Charter applies wherever DARED operates, including in partnership with donors, government bodies, and community-based organisations, and takes precedence over any local practice or informal custom that would conflict with it. It shall be signed by every representative of DARED prior to engagement in any DARED activity, and refresher acknowledgement shall be sought annually.

1. Purpose and Scope

This Charter sets out the ethical principles, standards of conduct, and accountability mechanisms that govern the behaviour of all DARED representatives. It exists to protect the people DARED serves — particularly children and other vulnerable groups — to protect DARED's staff and volunteers, and to safeguard the trust placed in DARED by communities, partners, and donors.

This Charter applies to all individuals acting on behalf of DARED, in any location, in person or online, whether in a paid, voluntary, or honorary capacity, for the duration of their association with the Institution.

2. Guiding Values

DARED's conduct is anchored in the values set out in the Institution's Constitution and expressed daily through:

- Integrity — acting honestly and consistently, even when unobserved.
- Equity and non-discrimination — treating every person without distinction of race, sex, colour, religion, disability, or origin.
- Accountability — accepting responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Transparency — being open about decisions, use of resources, and areas of interest.
- Respect for human dignity — placing the safety, wellbeing, and rights of beneficiaries above organisational or personal interest.
- Do no harm — anticipating and avoiding foreseeable harm to the people and communities DARED serves.

3. Zero-Tolerance Standards

DARED has zero tolerance for:

- Child abuse
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual harassment
- Abuse of power
- Human trafficking
- Forced labour

Every representative has a duty to protect vulnerable people. Zero tolerance means that any substantiated violation of these standards will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of engagement and, where appropriate, referral to law enforcement — regardless of the seniority, tenure, or perceived value of the individual involved.

4. Child Protection and Safeguarding

Because DARED's programmes regularly bring representatives into contact with children, the following minimum safeguarding standards apply in addition to the zero-tolerance standards above:

4.1 Guiding Principles

- The best interests of the child shall guide every decision affecting them.
- Every child has an equal right to protection from harm, regardless of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, or status.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not solely that of designated focal points.

4.2 Safe Conduct with Children

- No representative shall be alone with a single child in an unobserved setting; activities shall use the "two-adult rule" wherever practicable.
- Physical contact with children shall be appropriate, non-intrusive, and only where necessary for the activity (e.g. sports coaching, first aid).
- Photography, filming, or publication of images of children requires documented consent from a parent, guardian, or legal caregiver, and shall never include identifying details that could endanger the child.
- Transport of children in DARED or personal vehicles shall involve more than one adult wherever possible and shall be logged.

- Online and digital contact with children (messaging, social media) outside of official, supervised channels is prohibited.

4.3 Safe Recruitment

- All representatives working directly with children shall undergo reference checks and, where available, a police/criminal background check prior to engagement.
- This Charter shall be read, understood, and signed before any representative begins work involving direct contact with children.

DARED's dedicated Child Protection Policy sets out further operational detail, including referral pathways for suspected abuse, and shall be read alongside this Charter.

5. Conflict of Interest

Representatives shall declare, in writing, any personal, financial, or family interest that could reasonably be seen to influence their DARED-related decisions, including in recruitment, procurement, and partner selection.

- Gifts or hospitality beyond token/customary value shall be declined or reported to the Executive.
- No representative shall participate in a decision (hiring, procurement, partnership, disbursement) where they, or someone connected to them, stands to benefit.
- Board members and the Founder shall recuse themselves from votes in which they hold a direct interest.

6. Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption and Bribery

- No representative shall offer, solicit, or accept a bribe, kickback, or improper payment in connection with DARED's work.
- Falsification of financial records, receipts, beneficiary lists, or reports is strictly prohibited and shall be treated as fraud.
- All financial transactions shall follow the bookkeeping, budgeting, and audit provisions of the Constitution (Article VIII).

7. Anti-Human Trafficking and Forced Labour

- DARED shall never engage, directly or through a partner or supplier, any individual through coercion, deception, debt bondage, or withholding of identity documents.
- All work, including volunteer engagements, shall be entered into freely and may be left freely, subject to reasonable notice.

- DARED shall not knowingly engage suppliers, contractors, or partners with credible allegations of trafficking or forced labour.

8. Health and Safety

- DARED shall take reasonable steps to provide a safe working and programme environment for staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries.
- Representatives shall report hazards, incidents, and near-misses promptly to their supervisor or the Executive.
- Activities involving physical risk (e.g. sports programming) shall include basic first-aid provision and a named person responsible for safety on site.

9. Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Staff shall never:

- Exchange aid, assistance, or preferential treatment for sexual favours
- Exploit beneficiaries in any way, sexual or otherwise
- Engage in sexual relationships that involve an abuse of power or trust, including with any beneficiary under 18 regardless of the local age of consent
- Use organisational influence, resources, or position to pursue personal relationships with beneficiaries or subordinates

All allegations of SEA shall be investigated promptly, following a survivor-centred approach that prioritises the safety, dignity, and wishes of the person affected. Reports may be made through the channels described in Section 15 of this Charter.

10. Confidentiality

Representatives shall protect the confidentiality of:

- Beneficiary records
- Personnel files
- Financial information
- Donor information
- Medical information

- Child protection records

Confidential information shall only be shared on a need-to-know basis, and child protection records shall be subject to the strictest handling standards, accessible only to designated safeguarding focal points and, where legally required, investigating authorities.

11. Responsible Use of Organizational Resources

Employees and volunteers shall use DARED resources responsibly. Resources include:

- Vehicles
- Computers
- Internet
- Office equipment
- Project materials
- Funds

Personal misuse of organisational resources is prohibited. Any incidental personal use permitted by a supervisor shall not interfere with duties or incur cost to the Institution.

12. Environmental Responsibility

DARED commits to:

- Reduce waste
- Plant trees where appropriate
- Minimize pollution
- Encourage recycling
- Promote climate-smart programming
- Support sustainable development

13. Responsible Communication

Representatives shall:

- Communicate truthfully
- Avoid misinformation
- Respect confidentiality
- Use social media responsibly
- Protect DARED's reputation

No employee, volunteer, or partner representative shall speak to media, donors, or the public on behalf of DARED without prior authorisation from the Executive.

14. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DARED promotes workplaces and programmes free from:

- Discrimination
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Victimization
- Hate speech

All employees, volunteers, and beneficiaries deserve equal opportunity and equal treatment, consistent with Article 5.1 of the Constitution.

15. Reporting Ethical Concerns

Anyone — staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners, or members of the public — may report:

- Fraud
- Abuse
- Corruption
- Harassment
- Misconduct
- Safeguarding violations
- Financial irregularities
- Conflicts of interest

Reports may be made confidentially, in person, or by writing to info@idared.org, marked for the attention of the Executive. Retaliation against any person who reports a concern in good faith is strictly prohibited and shall itself be treated as a disciplinary matter.

16. Investigation Procedures

DARED shall ensure investigations into reported concerns are:

- Fair
- Independent
- Confidential

- Timely
- Evidence-based
- Respectful of all parties

Where an allegation involves a child or other vulnerable beneficiary, the investigation shall follow a survivor/child-centred approach and, where the allegation may constitute a crime under Cameroonian law, DARED shall refer the matter to the appropriate authorities without delay.

17. Disciplinary Measures

Violations of this Charter may result in:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Mandatory training
- Suspension
- Termination
- Recovery of losses
- Referral to law enforcement where appropriate

The severity of the measure shall be proportionate to the violation, with zero-tolerance breaches (Section 3) warranting the most severe response available.

18. Leadership Responsibilities

Managers and Board members shall:

- Lead by example
- Promote ethical behaviour
- Prevent misconduct
- Support reporting
- Ensure accountability
- Protect whistleblowers

19. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

DARED shall:

- Review this Charter every three years
- Provide annual ethics training

- Monitor compliance
- Update policies in line with international best practices and applicable Cameroonian law

20. Declaration of Commitment

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the DARED Organizational Ethics Charter. I agree to uphold its principles and conduct myself in a manner that reflects the values and reputation of DARED.

Name: TAMFU KILEM BONGWA

Position: Director

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'tamfu kilem bongwa', written over several horizontal lines.

Date: 2025