

Ethiopian Social Work Professionals Association (ESWPA)

Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

0.0 Preamble

The **Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards** serve as a framework for ethical practice and professional behaviour for all members of the ESWPA. It is intended to uphold the dignity and integrity of the social work profession while promoting the well-being of clients and communities as per the Association's bylaws.

1.0 Definition of Social Work

ESWPA recognizes and accepts the global definition of social work provided by IASSW & IFSW in their resolution in the 2014, Sydney, Australia Conference. Accordingly, social work in Ethiopia is defined as “A practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity are central to social work.

2.0 Legal and Policy Framework

This **Code of Conduct** and **Ethical Standard** document recognizes that all social work practice is performed, and all social workers abide by the following international, regional, and national legal documents.

1. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
2. The Ethiopian Social Work Act (under establishment).
3. The National Social Welfare Policy of Ethiopia.
4. The Children Policy of Ethiopia.
5. The ESWPA Bylaw.
6. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
7. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
8. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
9. The Convention on the Rights of the Child.
10. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the People.
11. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children.

4.0 ESWPA Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

4.1 Core Values and Ethical Principles

ESWPA addresses the following global core values and principles of social work.

Value: Service

Ethical principle: Serve people in need and work to address social problems.

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Challenge social injustice and work for social change on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical principles: Be respectful of every person and mindful of cultural and ethnic diversity in Ethiopia.

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

Ethical principle: Recognize and value the importance of human relationships, and work to strengthen these relationships to enhance the well-being of individuals, groups, and communities.

Value: Integrity

Ethical principle: Be trustworthy and uphold the profession's mission, values, principles, and standards.

Value: Competence

Ethical principle: Practice within areas of competence, continuously develop professional knowledge and expertise, and contribute to the knowledge of the profession.

We also uphold and embrace the following key local values, ensuring our professional practice reflects the cultural, social, and ethical principles that strengthen our communities:

Respect for Elders – A deep cultural value emphasizing listening to and honouring elders' wisdom in decision-making and social relations.

Community Solidarity – Mutual aid traditions that stress collective responsibility and cooperation in times of need.

Hospitality – Ethiopia is known for its generous hospitality, extending warmth and respect to all, including strangers.

Peace and Harmony – A national and cultural aspiration to resolve conflicts peacefully and foster social harmony.

Diversity and Unity – Ethiopia’s diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups coexist with a value of unity while respecting differences.

Faith and Spirituality – Ethiopia’s strong religious traditions (Christianity, Islam, and others) foster values like compassion, honesty, and humility.

Integrity and Accountability – Strong personal and professional responsibility is embedded in both traditional and modern Ethiopian ethics.

4.2 Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the social work professional practice in Ethiopia. Social workers are responsible for:

Service users: Social workers’ ethical responsibilities to service users are related to commitment, self-determination, informed consent, competence, cultural competence, and social diversity, conflict of interest, privacy and confidentiality, access to records, sexual relationships, Physical contact, sexual harassment, derogatory language, payments for services, lack of decision-making capacity, and interruption of services. Detailed guidelines shall be prepared for each of these responsibilities related to service users.

Colleagues: Social workers’ ethical responsibilities to colleagues are related to respect, referral for services, sexual relationships, impairment of colleagues, incompetence of colleagues, and unethical conduct of colleagues. Detailed guidelines shall be prepared for each of these responsibilities related to colleagues.

In practice settings: Social workers’ ethical responsibilities are related to supervision and consultation, education and training, performance evaluation, client records, billing, client transfer, administration, continuing education and staff development, commitment to employers, labour management, and disputes. Detailed guidelines shall be prepared for each of these responsibilities in practice settings.

Other professions: Social workers’ ethical responsibilities to other professions are related to competence, discrimination, private conduct, dishonesty, fraud and deception, impairment, misrepresentation, solicitations, and acknowledging credit. Detailed guidelines shall be prepared for each of these responsibilities related to other professions.

Social work profession: Social workers’ ethical responsibilities to the social work profession are related to the integrity of the profession, and evaluation and research.

Detailed guidelines shall be prepared for each of these responsibilities related to the social work profession.

Broader society: Social workers' ethical responsibility to the broader society is related to social welfare, public participation, public emergencies, social and political action,

4.3 Professional Conduct

Social workers in Ethiopia adhere to the following professional conduct.

Respect and Fairness: Treat all clients, colleagues, and stakeholders with respect, fairness, and courtesy, as mandated by the bylaws.

Confidentiality: Safeguard client information and maintain confidentiality unless legally mandated to disclose.

Cultural Competence: Strive to understand and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives, aligning with the association's commitment to inclusiveness.

4.4 Social Workers' Responsibilities

4.4.1 Responsibilities to Clients:

Client-centred Practice: Make clients' needs the primary focus of all professional activities.

Empowerment: Support clients in achieving self-determination and autonomy.

Informed Consent: Ensure that clients are fully informed about the services and obtain their consent before any intervention.

4.4.2 Responsibilities to Colleagues:

Collaboration: Work cooperatively with colleagues and other professionals to enhance service delivery.

Supportive Environment: Foster a workplace culture that encourages professional growth and ethical practice.

4.4.3 Responsibilities to the Profession

Advocacy: Promote the values and mission of the social work profession within the community and society at large.

Accountability: Adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the ESWPA and cooperate with disciplinary processes outlined in the bylaws.

4.4.4 Social Responsibility

Community Engagement: Actively engage in efforts to enhance the well-being of society and advocate for social reform.

Strengthen the Extended Familial Support System: Reinstate and enhance the long-sustained traditions of informal welfare security provided by the extended families to the needy members of the communities.

Non-Discrimination: Reject discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, ethnic background, political affiliation, religion, mental or physical ability, or any other status.

4.4.5 Membership Obligations

Timely Dues Payment: Members must pay membership dues on time and fulfil all obligations as outlined in the Bylaws.

Participation: Engage in regular and emergency meetings of the Association and contribute to discussions.

Volunteerism: Provide volunteer services to the Association to support its nurturance and growth.

4.4.6 Disciplinary Measures

Compliance: Members must comply with this Code of Conduct, the bylaws, and all applicable laws, regulations, and legal frameworks.

Disciplinary Actions: Violations of this Code may result in disciplinary actions, including warnings, suspension, withhold of professional practice, or termination of membership as stipulated in the Bylaws.

5.0 Conclusion

This Code of Conduct and ethical standard is intended to guide the ethical practice of social workers in Ethiopia. By adhering to these principles, members of the ESWPA and all professional social workers shall contribute to the advancement of the social work profession and the betterment of society.