



GROWTH NETWORKS UGANDA LIMITED (GRONET)

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

FIRST EDITION 2016

Operational definitions:

In this Code of conduct unless the context otherwise requires;

- a. "Committee" means either the headquarters, disciplinary committee or other units disciplinary committees /both as the case may be.
- b. "Member of staff" means an employee of GRONET.
- c. "Officer" means a member of staff with some definite official administrative responsibility in any section of the organization.
- d. "General public" means any person whether member of staff of the organization or not, not involved in the particular proceedings of the disciplinary committee.
- e. "Organization" means Growth networks Uganda limited established under the NGO board and companies Act.
- f. "Designated GRONET units" means headquarters and projects directly supervised by the headquarters, centers of excellence and training centers.
- g. "Head of unit" means direct heads of the units mentioned above.
- h. "Senior management" refers to members of management at headquarters i.e the president, Directors, and chief accountant.

The reputation of GRONET is an invaluable asset which each and every staff must safeguard.

RATIONALE

- Create an ethical environment for all staff members
- Instill and enhance discipline in conformity with Vision, Mission and Values.
- Enhance the professional performance of staff members in line with the professional ethical code.
- Provide clear guidance on acceptable behavior in the organization among staff and the outside world.
- Provide guidance in disciplinary procedures

1. JURISDICTION

- 1.1 This code of conduct will be part of the terms of service of all GRONET staff, stand-ins, part timers, temporally staff, interns, fellows and volunteers.
- 1.2 Complaints against staff can arise from fellow staff, Directors, BOD, clients or general public.
- 1.3 The disciplinary powers vested in the president as the administrative head of the organization shall remain in force.
- 1.4 A member of staff in charge of day to day administration of a department/section may initiate disciplinary measures by reporting in writing to the respective head of the unit.

The immediate supervisor shall initiate disciplinary measures against the head of unit/department/section.

- 1.5 Minor offences shall be handled by head of unit/section/department.
- 1.6 Serious or grave offences shall be referred by the head of a unit to the disciplinary committee for consideration. The president shall report to the Board of Directors serious disciplinary actions taken against senior management staff.
- 1.7 Disciplinary complaints against senior management shall be forwarded to the president and disciplinary complaints against the president shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors.

2. Disciplinary offences

Disciplinary offences under this code shall include the following:

a. Minor offences

These are offences deemed by management to be contrary to the standards and values of the organization, but are not serious enough to warrant instituting formal disciplinary proceedings. These will include the following:

- (i) Reporting late for work and or an authorized absence for one day.
- (ii) Carelessness.
- (iii) Untidiness as a result affecting the performance of the staff in accordance with the staff's terms of service.
- (iv) Failure to cooperate
- (v) Discreditable code of conduct like verbal abuse and /or any utterances, insults, insinuations, verbal or in writing, prejudicial to the name of the organization, appearing or behaving in a manner that is prejudicial to the name and interests of the organization.
- (vi) Failure or take appropriate action on any matter or information coming to his/her knowledge prejudicial to the interest of the organization.
- (vii) Dressing in a manner that brings disrepute to the organizational values, mission and vision.
- (viii) Any other as may be deemed fit by management.

b. Serious offences

These are offences deemed by management to be sufficiently serious to require immediate application of formal disciplinary procedures. These will include:

- (i) Persistent occurrences of minor offences.
- (ii) An authorized absence from work for two or more consecutive days.
- (iii) Insubordination
- (iv) Negligence
- (v) Drunkenness and drug abuse while on duty.

- (vi) Instigating or attempting to instigate discontent among staff against the organization.
- (vii) Miss use of or causing damage to property and loss of organizational equipment through default, negligence or misconduct.
- (viii) Breach of confidentiality which includes but not limited to disclosing in any way to unauthorized person(s), any confidential matter/ information pertaining to the organization or any of its staff.
- (ix) Willfully making a false misleading or inaccurate or incomplete representation leading to erroneous decisions by the organization.
- (x) Destroying or mutilating any official document or record or property movable or immovable or altering or erasing any entry in records no matter the reason. GRONET management takes the issue of documents and its property seriously.
- (xi) Proven physical attack on a colleague or member of the public whether within or outside GRONET premises.
- (xii) Personal financial embarrassments e.g. over borrowing and failure to meet financial obligations.
- (xiii) Abuse of information, communication and technologies systems and equipments.
- (xiv) Child neglect and failure to take care of one's family will be taken as a serious violation of GRONET values.

c. Grave offences/ Gross misconduct

These are offences which are sufficiently serious to lead to dismissal.

- (i) Offences against morality which include but not limited to sexual harassment(and as provided for in section 7 of the employment Act of 2015, sexist conduct either within or outside the organization resulting in disrepute of the organization)
- (ii) Using one's official position to demand for sexual favours from staff, clients or members of the public.
- (iii) Incitement or exerting undue influence or attempting to do the same which includes but not limited to leading to inducing or persuading or joining other staff in misconduct against discipline in the organization.
- (iv) Willfully making a false, misleading or inaccurate representation causing financial loss to the organization through negligence.
- (v) Collecting money from the public on behalf of the organization, other than in the course of official duties, without written permission of management.
- (vi) Fraud or intent to defraud by falsely claiming sickness or other benefits, or giving incorrect information to the organization in order to receive additional benefits.
- (vii) Falsehood which includes but not limited to the following:

- a. Making or signing any official document or book, statement or entry which one knows or has reasonable grounds to believe to be false or,
 - b. False representation by using, adopting, assuming, allowing to be associated with any qualification which one has never officially or formally acquired.
 - c. Impersonation- presenting a different identity other than the one that one actually is.
- (viii) Misappropriation of the organization funds through false receipts or expenditure statements, or other means like forgery, embezzlement and/ or failure to account for monies or property received in his/her official capacity.
- (ix) Soliciting or receiving directly or indirectly any bribe or property using one's official position for one's personal gain. For avoidance of doubt, personal gain means and includes gain to staff or members of one's family.
- (x) Theft of money, property or deliberate acts that cause loss and disrepute to the organization.
- (xi) Acting in breach of professional ethics of the respective disciplines.
- (xii) A contractual staff taking up full time employment outside GRONET.

3. Disciplinary procedure

(a) Minor offences

- If an employee commits a minor offence for the first time, the head of the department /section /unit will make an inquiry into the matter to determine whether it was actually committed. Depending on the outcome of the inquiry, remedial measures may be taken which may include but not limited to counseling.
- If no change of behavior is recorded, the head of the unit shall give the employee a verbal warning explaining the nature of the offence, the importance of not repeating it and the penalty that can be applied if it is repeated.
- A verbal warning must be recorded on personal file, and should be valid for three months, provided it is noted and documented improvement, the supervise in his/ her discretion cancel the warning.
- If the employee fails to respond positively to the verbal warning, the head of the section/ unit/ department will invite the employee for a discussion regarding the offence. He/she will be issued with a written warning, explaining the nature and seriousness and consequences of the offence, copies of which shall be sent to the relevant authorities and on the employee's personal file.
- A written warning will be valid for twelve month provided management reserves the right to revise the warning on grounds of noted improvement in the conduct of the employee.

- Written warning letters for the offences under this section shall be issued only twice. If the employee on the second and final written warning does not change his/her conduct for which the written warning was issued, he/she may be suspended.

b. Serious offences

In the case of a serious offence, the procedure will be as follows:

- (i) The disciplinary committee will carry out preliminary investigations and determine the seriousness of the offence. The disciplinary committee shall be mobilized by the head of the unit as provided for under 1.4
- (ii) The employee shall be informed in writing about the offence and will be required to offer a written reply to the head of the unit or director human resource in response to the allegations within a period of five working days from the date of receipt of the request.
- (iii) The disciplinary shall form an opinion whether to formally charge the employee or not within seven days from the date of receipt of the reply.
- (iv) Where the disciplinary committee finds that there is a case established for which the employee should appear and defend, it will communicate to the employee in writing spelling out precisely and concisely the nature of the allegation, the hearing date, place and time.
- (v) The disciplinary committee will after consideration of the case, give appropriate directions, recommendations and or any other disciplinary actions it deems appropriate.

C Grave offences

These are reported to the head of unit or respective supervisor. The procedure followed will be the same as in (b) above. In case of grave offences, the procedure will be as follows:

- (i) The head of unit will inform director Human resource and in cases of the directors and managers, the president.
- (ii) The employee will be informed in writing about the offence and requested to write their defense to head of the unit in the case of center of excellence and to the head of the disciplinary committee in the case of headquarter but copied to director human resource.
- (iii) The staff will be interdicted or suspended to pave way for preliminary investigations.
That the procedures followed will be as stated in (d) and (e).

d. Interdiction:

- (i) If the president commits any of the offences considered by BOD to be grave, the chairman of the Board in consultation with the vice-Chairman, the secretary and honorary treasurer shall interdict the President.
- (ii) If the director/ manager commit any of the offences considered by the President to be grave, the President in consultation with the Board chairman shall interdict the offender.
- (iii) If an employee commits any of the offences considered by management to be grave, the head of the unit or director human resource for the case of headquarters on recommendation of the respective heads of units shall interdict the offender. The head of the unit shall form a committee to investigate the case or the internal auditors shall investigate depending on the nature of the case. The investigation shall not exceed four weeks.
- (iv) An employee who is interdicted shall forthwith cease to perform official functions and shall hand over to the head of unit all keys, files ,official materials and other organization properties, which may have come into his/her possession by reason of his/her employment.
- (v) An employee who has been interdicted shall receive half of his basic salary for the period of interdiction but not exceeding one month. Interdiction shall not exceed four weeks or the duration of inquiry whichever is shorter.
- (vi) Where an employee on interdiction is re- instated, he/she will be paid the basic salary withheld during the period of interdiction in arrears.

e. Interdiction based on criminal proceedings.

- (i) Where an employee has been charged with a criminal offence and criminal proceedings are pending against him/her, in a court of law or are about to be instituted against him, management may be having regard to the nature of the offence and public interest inform the disciplinary committee for an appropriate advice. Management may interdict the employee if there is a likelihood of interfering with witnesses and or destroying evidences by virtue of his/her office or where the prosecution of the employee is likely to prejudice of GRONET.
- (ii) Center management shall inform the disciplinary committee about the interdiction and the reasons thereof for purposes of carrying

out an inquiry on the matter which the management may have reasons to believe may reveal a cause for dismissal of such an employee.

- (iii) Where an employee has been interdicted from duty, he/she will be paid half salary during the period of interdiction.
- (iv) Where an employee who has been interdicted from his/her duties, is acquitted or discharged by a court of law, the disciplinary committee shall as soon as possible thereafter prepare a report and recommendations for management or the president to decide whether or not to reinstate the employee.
- (v) Senior management reserves the right to dismiss the employee, if the offence committed compromises the interests and objectives of GRONET.
- (vi) No employee convicted on a criminal charge, whose services are terminated in connection with this charge, shall be entitled to receive any emoluments from the date of his/her, conviction.

Disciplinary committee

- (i) There shall be established disciplinary committees at headquarters and other designated GRONET units to deal with disciplinary cases of serious and grave nature of such cases as may be referred to from time to time.
- (ii) A staff member will not be a member of a disciplinary committee handling a case involving a staff senior to them.

Composition of disciplinary committee

Two sets of disciplinary committees shall be established at GRONET headquarters and these shall be Disciplinary committee 1 and 2. In case where the Board is involved in recruitment, it will also be involved in disciplining.

(a) Disciplinary committee 1

The headquarters' disciplinary committee 1 will handle cases in respect of senior management.

Composition

- It will be chaired by a Board member appointed by the chairman of BOD in consultation with the President.
- Four other members appointed by the President. Where need arises, external support may sought to interpret and analyze evidence.

- Where a disciplinary case concerns the President, the chairman BOD shall appoint the chairperson of the disciplinary committee in consultation with the board members.
- The accused may come with a peer of their choice who should be a GRONET staff.

b. Disciplinary committee two

Disciplinary committee two shall be established at Headquarter to handle all matters in respect of staff from salary scale at headquarter and other units managed by headquarter.

Composition

- (i) A director appointed by the President will chair it.
- (ii) A representative from Human resource and administration directorate plus three other members one of whom must be a peer.
- (iii) The accused may with written permission of the committee come with a colleague who will be a GRONET staff during the proceedings for support.

C . Other GRONET units

The Human resource Director shall be the chairperson of the panel in the respective units and where he/she has conflict of interest, the deputy human resource administration in consultation with the President shall appoint from among the other Directors a chairperson for the committee.

Other members of the committee shall be:

- (i) A senior member of Staff at the Centre
- (ii) Representative from the concerned unit preferably the line supervisor and
- (iii) The administration human resource shall be the secretary
- (iv) The respective unit manager and
- (v) Two other members one of whom must be peer of the accused or any other member on the management team.

The accused may come with a colleague who will be a GRONET staff during the proceedings.

In cases where conflict of interest is identified, changes in the composition of the panel shall be made by the BOD, President and the Director human resource and administration as per the provided mandate.

Quorum

Two thirds (2/3) of members of the disciplinary committee shall form a quorum at each meeting.

Procedure

The disciplinary committee will regulate its own procedure giving due regard to the principles of natural justice and shall not apply technical rules of evidence.

Where a case has been identified after a staff has been transferred to another unit, such a case will be handled at the unit where the same offence was committed.

4. Functions of the disciplinary committee

The disciplinary committee shall have the following functions and powers:

- (a) To select a team to investigate any offence by a member of staff as may be referred by the head of unit and other sources including community members, stakeholders, other staff members, clients, and partners as the case may be.
- (b) To receive and read documents and all relevant evidence for the hearing of the misconduct referred to the committee.
- (c) To arrange for disciplinary proceedings including the serving of due notice and service of documents if any to the accused member of staff.
- (d) To conduct disciplinary proceedings in accordance with this code.
- (e) To keep a confidential register of all disciplinary proceedings, reports, related documents and information. The secretary of the committee shall keep all the minutes/ proceedings, reports etc.
- (f) To make a written compressive report on the disciplinary proceedings to the chairman BOD, the President, Director human resource and administration as may be appropriate. This report should contain:
 - (i) Members present
 - (ii) The nature of the offence
 - (iii) Findings of the investigations
 - (iv) Conclusion of the committee
 - (v) Recommendations for disciplinary measures
 - (vi) Any other relevant information.

The chairman BOD, the President and Director human resource and administration will:

- (i) Accept all or part of the recommendation of the report
- (ii) Make an independent decision based on facts and compliance with policies and procedures.
- (iii) Reject the report and reconstitute another committee to hear the case if it finds a discrete reason for such action.

5. Hearing of disciplinary procedures

- (a) The disciplinary committee shall inform the accused in writing of the alleged disciplinary offence and will be accompanied by copies of the relevant documentary evidence.
- (b) The chairperson of the committee shall ensure that, written notice, setting out the disciplinary offence with which the accused is charged is given asking him/her to present written reply to the committee at least seven days from the date of receipt of the charge. The accused may be availed with the relevant documents within office premises in the presence of an appointed member of staff.
- (c) The accused member of staff shall be allowed full opportunity to adduce and present evidence including examining witnesses if any, in his/ her defense.
- (d) The proceedings of the committee shall be closed to the public
- (e) The committee shall conduct its proceedings without bias and no strict rules of legal procedure and technicalities shall apply.
- (f) Where on expiry of the period given in the notice for the hearing of the disciplinary offence, the accused member of staff;
 - (i) Admit in writing having committed the offence and does not wish to be heard in person or
 - (ii) Has not responded in writing without any known reasonable excuseThe committee having been satisfied and determined that he/she was served with and received the required written notice, may proceed to hear and decide on the accusation, including the recommendation on the issue of the punishment, in the absence of the accused member of staff.
GRONET reserves the right to pursue criminal/ civil proceedings against an employee.

6. Disciplinary measures /measures

Any one or more of the following disciplinary measures may be imposed on an employee of GRONET as a result of disciplinary proceedings instituted against him/her under this code of conduct.

- (i) Documented verbal warnings
- (ii) Written warnings
- (iii) Final written warnings.
- (iv) Denial of consideration for either promotion or redeployment for a maximum period of one year from the date of judgment.
- (v) Stoppage of increment of salary for a definite period of time.
- (vi) Demotion
- (vii) Denial of contract renewal
- (viii) Denial of all or some of the privileges under the term of service for a specified period of time

- (ix) Recovery of the cost or any part of the cost of any loss, damage or breakage caused by default or negligence or misconduct
- (x) Replacement of lost or damaged property due the misconduct of the convicted member of staff
- (xi) Suspension on half pay for a maximum of fifteen consecutive working days
- (xii) Extension of probationary period for a definite period
- (xiii) Termination of contract
- (xiv) Dismissal
- (xv) Should a staff be convicted for any criminal charges, Headquarter management shall meet to discuss and either dispose off the case or dismiss the staff.
- (xvi) GRONET upholds its core values so dearly and as a result, it encourages its staff to be exemplary in the way they live. Acts like child neglect, failure to take care of one's family will be taken as a serious violation of the GRONET values. In such cases, the concerned staff shall be counseled accordingly. If the practice continues, the case shall be referred to relevant authorities' e.g. probation welfare officer office, FIDA and others for action. GRONET shall collaborate with and upon the advice from the relevant authorities. GRONET will treat the case as a serious offence.
It will be the duty of the chairperson of the disciplinary committee to communicate the findings of the disciplinary committee to the concerned member of staff both verbally and in writing after the Board, President or Director human resources and administration's advice.

7. Appeals under progressive disciplinary procedures

Any member of staff who feels aggrieved by the decision of the disciplinary may appeal in writing to the Board of Directors in case of staff on special scale and other staff to the President through the Director human resource and administration. If the President's action is not satisfactory enough to the staff, they may appeal to the BOD within fourteen days on receipt of a written notice of the disciplinary committee's decision and the decision of the BOD shall be final.

8. Grievance procedures

In case a staff member has a legitimate grievance against a colleague, head of a unit of department, or the organization in relation to benefits that may apply to him/her on conditions of work, unreasonable instructions, poor conditions or other matters connected therein, such a member of staff may formally lodge a complaint with the appropriate officer in the organization

(a) 1st level

This will be with the employees' head of unit, if the latter is not the one against whom the grievance is held. The head of unit shall investigate the matter and if possible solve the issue. In case the employee has a grievance against the head of unit, then he/she may present the issue in writing to the Director human resource that will investigate and take appropriate action in consultation with the President where necessary.

(b) 2nd level

If one does not achieve satisfactory results in case of center of excellence, the employee may present the issue to the next levels of authority. If these channels fail, the grievance will be presented in writing to the President who will investigate and take appropriate action which will be final.

In case of Headquarter, the employee may present the issue to the President who will investigate and take appropriate action. If that fails, the grievance should be presented to the BOD.

(c) 3rd level

For grievances held against the President or organization as represented by the President, the employee may appeal to BOD which will investigate the matter and reach a decision. The decision will be final.

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