

ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY

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This anti-corruption policy lays the ground for Left International Forum's work on anti-corruption. The policy shows how Left International Forum defines, detects, and deals with corruption.

1. Background

Corruption is a serious obstacle to peace, democracy, and sustainable development. Corruption hits marginalised groups the hardest, who, due to corruption, get higher costs, and poorer access to basic public services and decision-making positions.

Corruption is widespread in many countries where Left International Forum has cooperating partners. Fighting corruption is a prerequisite for Left International Forum to contribute to a democratic and equal world with respect for human rights.

2. What is corruption?

Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain and poses a serious development challenge. Corruption undermines democracy and good governance and weakens economic development by generating distortions and inefficiency. Corruption increases the vulnerability of marginalised groups by denying them free and fair access to services they are entitled to. Corruption appears independently of the systemic context at all levels and in all countries.

All national legislation considers corruption illegal, but there are considerable variations in how legal systems define and address corrupt behaviours. What to some may appear to be illicit or illegal practices might by others be acceptable, both legally and culturally.

Local legislation, rules and regulations must be respected, but never as an excuse for supporting corruption or other unethical behaviour. Petty corruption encourages and lays the basis for large-scale corruption and vice versa.

Left International Forum is subject to Swedish legislation and regulations independent of where and with whom the organisation works.



All organisations involved in development cooperation risk being affected by corruption. Corruption challenges the objectives of Left International Forum's work and the most fundamental values on which the organisation is built.

Typical forms of corruption and other irregularities include, but are not limited to:

- **Favouritism/nepotism:** The unfair favouring of a person or group at the expense of others.
- **Bribery:** When someone improperly provides goods or services in return for some form of improper compensation.
- **Sharing of profits:** Such as kickbacks, cuts, etc.
- **Diversion of resources for private gain:** Includes fraud, embezzlement, and theft of resources for own use, etc.
- **Misuse of power and/or position:** To use entrusted power for personal benefits, e.g., money, services, sexual favours, etc., in exchange for food, shelter, etc.
- **Failure to act:** For example, failure to prosecute someone suspected.

3. The importance of working on anti-corruption

Civil society has an important role to play in curbing corruption in society. By acting as a “watchdog” and monitoring politicians, the business community and other decision-makers, civil society could strengthen transparency in society and increase the degree of accountability.

Civil society can also reduce corruption by strengthening the people's influence over decision-making and contributing to education for democratic culture and democratic values of citizens and society.

4. Basic principles to combat corruption

To combat corruption and other irregularities Left International Forum consider the following basic principles as fundamental:

- **Awareness:** To combat corruption and other irregularities, Left International Forum, and its cooperating partner must be aware of the mechanisms that drive corruption and how it is prevented. The aim is to create a proactive attitude in identifying and mitigating risks concerning corruption. Although guidelines against corruption and other irregularities are global and absolute, the training of all involved must be adapted to the local context. Left International Forum's anti-corruption policy needs to be followed by all parties.

Reliable systems for financial administration and internal control are not static and must be developed over time based on learning. It must, therefore, be ensured that lessons learned are spread throughout the organisation and incorporated into the professional functions.



- **Transparency:** Left International Forum and its partner organisations should be characterised by transparency. All steering documents, such as statutes, policies, strategies, plans, decisions, reports, and financial issues, must be transparent.

Transparency in activities strengthens control, and confidence is created for employees, donors, and other partners as well as beneficiaries.

Transparency is crucial for tackling corruption.

- **Accountability:** Responsible persons and/or organisations must be held accountable to the bodies that gave them positions of trust to manage activities and/or businesses.

To ensure accountability, organisations and trusts should have regular board meetings and a conference or an annual general meeting where board members are kept responsible for their actions.

There need to be clear and well-documented decision-making structures, mandates, and administrative structures that share the tasks concerning responsibility and control on different posts. These are vital elements in the potential for operational accountability.

An organisation's financial and internal control capacity must be adequate before Left International Forum can channel any funds to its activities. When asked for, a partner organisation must demonstrate their ability to improve its financial administration and internal control systems to be eligible for continued support.

Financial reports must be followed up and carefully analysed concerning the organisation's activities. Left International Forum's staff are accountable and must work closely with the partner organisation to ensure that high-quality monitoring is provided.

To mitigate risks and ensure quality in Left International Forum's work, a close relationship with the partner organisation and efficient monitoring are prerequisites to combat corruption.

- **Zero tolerance:** Left International Forum stands for a zero-tolerance approach to corruption in all its forms and does not tolerate any form of corruption in relation to its operations. Both the organisation and all staff have a duty to immediately report all suspicions of corruption. All suspected cases of corruption are assessed and investigated, and disciplinary measures are taken in all such cases as appropriate, in a professional, transparent, and fair manner.

5. Obligations to report

Left International Forum's Board and staff members, the partner organisation's Board and staff members and all others involved are obliged to immediately report on any suspected cases of corruption and other irregularities. Reports can be made to the project manager, Left International Forum's management, Left International Forum's whistleblowing committee, or the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). All reports on corruption will be investigated, and suitable remedies will be taken.

Failure to report suspicion may lead to legal action or other disciplinary measures. Fear of losing public or financial support will never be accepted as an excuse for failure to report.



6. How to handle irregularities and corruption

All illegal actions must be reported to the Police by the organisation where the illegal activity occurs. Left International Forum reserves the right to withdraw support or deny funding when there are strong indications of corruption or fraud, even if these cannot be proven or when there is no conviction in a court of law.

Staff security will always be given priority; Left International Forum will not put staff in danger due to strict adherence to these regulations.

7. Development of the anti-corruption work

The Board and management of Left International Forum have the ultimate responsibility for developing tools and routines of internal control to combat corruption. In practice, preventing corruption is the responsibility of all involved in activities financed by Left International Forum. The anti-corruption work should thus be embedded in the carrying out of day-to-day activities.

The specific responsibility for implementing and developing these guidelines and monitoring the work against corruption lies with Left International Forum's Secretary-General with staff.

8. Ownership and follow-up

This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Left International Forum. The Secretary-General is responsible for compliance with the policy and related documents and ensures they are up-to-date and relevant.

Related documents:

- Whistleblowing policy
- Code of conduct
- Procurement policy