



## **VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

Version: June 2017

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As an international development agency, ACORD is committed to the Global Goals that balance the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and that is leaving no-one behind. We support the African Union's vision of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena". ACORD's work across East & Horn, Central, Southern and West Africa builds active citizenship and more responsive institutions contributing to a peaceful, inclusive and prosperous Africa. Our work in more than 12 African countries strengthens resilience and sustainable livelihoods, conflict resolution and peace building, and rights and responsibility promotion.

Because communities are influenced by decisions and actions taken at national and international levels, there is a need to make connections with others and be part of citizen movements. ACORD is facilitating and convening such linkages. ACORD was founded more than 40 years ago, upon the belief that civic-driven actions can bring about transformative changes in society. We recognise that combining the action of international, national and community volunteers into a ripple effect can increase outreach and multiply impact for social justice. Volunteerism and volunteers can contribute to the transformative delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at large, as well as all areas of ACORD's work.

Volunteer interns are a vital part of the ACORD family. Volunteering can support the successful delivery of our public benefit mandate contributing to all areas of our work. Similarly we recognise our duty as a professional development organisation to offer young, qualified and unemployed graduates an opportunity to gain useful work experience and increase their employability after completing a volunteer internship programme with ACORD.

We define **Volunteers** as people who support ACORD by giving their time to carry out roles, which have been initiated by or agreed with ACORD. No payment other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses is made to people who give their time to volunteer.

We define a **volunteer intern** as an unsalaried person who provides assistance with clearly defined duties and who in turn gains work experience or improves specific skills while volunteering at ACORD that increases their future employability. Interns are volunteers with clearly defined roles, which are predominantly project-based. Interns are formally recruited and managed. Interns tend to be recruited for a specific period of time of either 3, 6 or maximum 12 months.

The volunteering relationship is a unique relationship based on trust and does not involve the obligations associated with employment. This policy outlines the key principles on which the relationship between volunteers and ACORD as a public benefit organisation is based.

It outlines our key policy provisions in relation to: Recruitment of volunteers, including equality and diversity; Induction and training; Expenses; Supervision and support; Health and safety; Confidentiality and data protection; and Problem solving and complaint procedures for volunteers.

## 2. RECRUITMENT PROCESS INCLUDING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

### Eligibility

ACORD is an equal opportunity organisation and it is our policy to treat applicants and staff in the same way regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, nationality, colour, race, marital status, ethnic origin, disability or HIV status.

Volunteering with ACORD is an opportunity open for all who commit to our vision and mission and sign up to our code of conduct, in so far as the needs of prospective volunteers match the needs of the organisation.

Some roles may require additional screening, for example if the role involves working with children or vulnerable adults or access to confidential data.

### **Recruitment process**

The recruitment of volunteers is coordinated through ACORD's Human Resources and Organisational Development Department.

Volunteer opportunities are advertised on the ACORD website as well as through a variety of Volunteer networks.

While a formal recruitment procedure is not required for all volunteering roles, the spirit of good recruitment practice shall be observed, in line with ACORD's Equal Opportunity Policy.

ACORD respects and celebrates diversity and will not condone, tolerate or ignore any form of discrimination or unacceptable behaviour.

We'll base our selection of volunteers on the ability of each applicant to carry out the role, taking into account any effect volunteering may have on the safety of all parties, our brand and reputation.

### **Volunteer Agreement**

A written agreement will be drawn up between ACORD and every selected volunteer.

This agreement will cover the anticipated location and hours of work, description of the role, code of conduct and supervisory/support arrangements.

It will also outline limits and procedures for reimbursement of eligible expenses as per ACORD procedures and the respective country legislation and practice (e.g. reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses in the UK, payment of an intern Stipend in Kenya etc.)

## **2. INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

All volunteers will be provided with either an induction or access to useful materials and information to get to know the various areas of work and relevant organisational staff and procedures.

Volunteer interns are invited to attend regular staff meetings and any other meeting that would enable them to strengthen their capacities and skills, gain experience and perform the role to mutual satisfaction.

We wish to introduce volunteers into a culture of good work that will enhance, inspire and empower them both in performing their role in ACORD, as well as to provide them with new opportunities, skills and valuable experience, which they can use in their further career.

## **3. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT**

Every volunteer will be given a staff contact. This will either be a person in charge of the geographic location or of the area of work in which the volunteering is.

All volunteer interns will be assigned a supervisor.

This arrangement will enable the supervisor/staff contact and volunteer to discuss the tasks at hand and also the progress of the assignment and feedback on areas of improvement or where more support is required.

#### **4. LOCATION AND HOURS OF WORK**

ACORD is sourcing volunteers from the different countries where we are registered to operate, to support our work from each of these countries.

ACORD is not independently recruiting and sending volunteers internationally as we don't have the licenses and permits to do so.

Some online volunteering roles could be performed from any location and/or from home.

A volunteer will be required to work from a location that is convenient to both the volunteer and Supervisor in relation to the role.

Hours of work will be agreed based on the tasks at hand and the time the volunteer wants to give.

We expect volunteer interns to volunteer for between 2-4 days per week, with at least a part of this normally being office based.

ACORD can offer flexible volunteering hours to fit with for example a part-time job, studies or child care commitments.

Location and hours of work will be specified in each individual volunteer written agreement and agreed with the staff contact.

#### **5. EXPENSES**

ACORD volunteers are entitled to reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel and meal costs for the days worked.

Beyond this ACORD can not offer any further financial support as it would no longer be legally categorized as volunteering.

Payment of reasonable expenses must be authorized in advance and the procedures for claiming this be agreed with the staff contact to ensure compliance with ACORD procedures and applicable legislation.

#### **6. INSURANCE**

ACORD has appropriate types of insurance in place to cover its volunteers. These include Employers' Liability insurance and public liability insurance, but does not cover the personal belongings of volunteers.

#### **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

ACORD is committed to ensuring the well-being and safety whilst people are volunteering.

We expect our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment.

This will entail to take reasonable care of themselves and people affected by their actions, cooperate with staff who fulfill their statutory duties, follow health and safety measures that are in place at the premises they might be working at, report any incidents, be aware of what to do in case of an emergency; and take part in any health and safety trainings as might be requested of them.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

Volunteers are expected to follow ACORD's policies and measures to protect and keep confidential any personal, sensitive, or commercially sensitive information they come into contact with through performing their volunteering role.

The right to any original work such as photography, artwork, graphic design and written work and results of research produced in the course of volunteering for ACORD, will belong to ACORD, unless otherwise agreed.

## **9. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Volunteers are expected to ensure that the information and opinions they share, including on personal social media accounts, protects ACORD's reputation and are not in conflict with ACORD's brand.

Volunteers should not give comments or stories directly to the media, unless the volunteer role specifically includes talking to the press or other local media. Any media requests can be referred to the relevant department or staff contact.

## **10. PROBLEM SOLVING AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Volunteer will be subject to ACORD's grievance and disciplinary procedure as detailed in ACORD's Global Human Resources Management Manual.

The first point of contact for volunteers in case of any grievances, is their staff contact/supervisor or this person's line manager.

Volunteers are also free to make use of ACORD's whistle blowing policy to raise any other relevant concerns that are not of a personal nature or directly to do with their volunteering role.

## **11. FEEDBACK AND REFERENCES**

The volunteer will normally have a meeting with his/her staff contact at least every three months or at the end of a volunteer internship as part of ACORD's commitment to responsible volunteering policy and to monitor the implementation of its volunteering programme.

Volunteers who have satisfactorily performed their role can be issued an ACORD letter of confirmation attesting to the role they have completed and the experience gained to promote the candidate's future employability.

Volunteering will not guarantee a job with ACORD, but volunteers are eligible to apply for any vacant paid positions that might open up.

## **12. POLICY REVIEW**

Reviewing compliance of this policy will be the function of such staff and units responsible for ACORD's human resources and organizational development. Such review reports will be presented and discussed in Senior Management Team and Board meetings at least once a year.