

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INTERVIEWERS**

### **Scope of this document**

This document applies to all those working with ISMU Foundation, as employees or collaborators, on projects and/or activities of research. Its purpose is to ensure the respect of confidentiality and protection of data and information regarding participants. Specific provisions are included for the protection of vulnerable target - as children and adolescents - involved in activities of research and interviews from abuse of any kind.

ISMU ensures that all collaborators and employees who will be working in direct contact with minors/adolescents are presented with the Child Code of Conduct for safeguarding minors upon signing their employment contract.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY**

The Foundation has adopted the requisite, adequate and proper measures for best protecting participants' and minors' data in accordance with Reg. 2016/679 on privacy. All researchers are required to respect in full the directives issues by the Foundation with regard to the processing of personal data.

Any confidential information of which persons subject to this Code of Conduct become aware in the process of undertaking their respective activities must neither be shared outside the Foundation nor used to serve any personal ends, such as achieving a privileged position or obtaining benefits.

### **Principles**

- Respect: all evidence-generating activities should ensure respect for all persons. Respect demands that individuals be treated as autonomous agents. An autonomous

agent is an individual capable of deliberation about personal goals and of acting under the direction of such deliberation. To respect autonomy is to give weight to autonomous persons' values, preferences, and beliefs and to recognize their capability for self-legislation, their ability to make judgments, to state their opinions and to make choices.

- The Foundation respects the principles of the United Nations Charter<sup>1</sup> and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup> in its statutory values, as also in its projects involving minors, from children to adolescents. In pursuing its social objectives, ISMU contributes to promoting and protecting the rights of all minors.
- Informed consent: For any primary data collection, informed consent is obtained by the respondent; if the respondent is a child, this entails assent by the child and informed consent by their caretaker. Once identified the individual participants, research staff will contact respective guardians and explain the research activities in its purpose and methodology. Once obtained guardians verbal consent, ISMU staff will provide the informed consent form, outlining all the procedures to be taken to ensure child protection and privacy, and request the guardians' signature.
- Confidentiality and Professionalism: ISMU personnel will devote equal attention to all urgent cases identified in the course of the activities. It will ensure no dispersion of confidential information. The communication will be set up in such a way to reduce communication leaks or any violation of the privacy of the child and other respondents. The data management plan specifically outlines appropriate procedures for the collection, treatment and disclosure of confidential information.

## **Procedures for interviews**

Before the interviews the researcher has:

1. to read accurately all ethic-related documents:
  - informed consent form;
  - Privacy protocol;
  - child protection policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Entered into force on 24 October [1945](#), ratified by Italy under law no. 848 of 17 August 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989, ratified by Italy under law no. 176 of 27 May 1991.

2. to inform the potential participant all the information about the interview, and to make sure that she/he fully understands the research and its implications. The informed consent document will provide specific information about the study and its purpose, and will contain a description of the procedures that will be performed, a description of possible risks or discomforts associated with the study, a description of any benefits to the participants, contact information for questions concerning the study, for questions concerning research participant rights, and a statement that participation in the study is voluntary (for more details refer to the Consent/Assent forms).
3. To provide the participants with a copy of the signed informed consent form.

The interviewer has to give to the participant or to the guardian (in case of minors) the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by him/her has to be answered correctly and to the best ability of interviewer. The individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has to be given freely and voluntarily.

### **Specific procedures in case of interview to minors**

#### Informed assent/consent

- After the selection of the potential participant, the interviewer engages with his/her legal representative to seek his/her consent for the child to participate in the data collection exercise using the Consent Form.
- Upon consent from the child's legal representative, the interviewer engages with the child to seek his/her assent to participate in the data collection exercise using the Assent form.
- No data collection exercise may be carried out without the formal consent of the legal representative AND the assent from the child.
- See the Informed Consent/Assent form.

#### Data collection time

- Interviewers shall make sure both with the facility representatives and the children that the time of data collection does not interfere with the daily schedule of the children (schooling, recreational activities, meals, rest, praying, etc.).
- Interview and focus group exercises should take strictly the time needed to collect relevant information to minimize their impact on the children's daily schedule.

#### Data collection space and privacy

- The interview and focus group should take place in a room that guarantees the security and privacy of the respondents. Therefore, interviewers shall ask the reception centre management for a place where they and the respondents will not be heard by non-participants.
- If non-participants are present in the data collection room, interviewers explain them that in order to protect the participants' privacy, non-participants should leave the room.
- If privacy cannot be guaranteed the interview is rescheduled.
- If third parties are interfering with an interview or focus group, the Interviewers will interrupt the data collection exercise.

#### Confidentiality and anonymization

- Data collection forms are anonymous, and the Interviewers shall not record the names of the participants.
- To protect anonymity during Focus Groups the Interviewers shall request participants to refrain referring to individual cases presented during the discussion outside the group with non-participants.
- However, the Interviewers shall inform the participants about the risk of other participants reporting topics discussed during the session.
- At the end of individual interviews, participants will be granted the possibility to check the script to make sure that answers were recorded correctly.

#### Addressing discomfort from a child during data collection

- Interviewers shall remind the children that they have the right to interrupt the interview at any point and are free not to answer specific questions if they wish so.
- Interviewers shall ensure that concerns and distress are timely detected and addressed during the data collection phase, including interrupting momentarily, or definitively the interview to protect the Best Interest of the Child.

#### Ensuring cultural sensitiveness

- The interviewer team accounts for potential political and cultural sensitivities of participants. Each sub-team will include a female and male component. Interviewers are trained to ensure full respect of participants political or cultural sensitivities.
- Interviewers will not provide any information regarding their religious or political affiliations.

### Collecting complaining about data collection

- Interviewers shall address children's concerns in the first instance and provide response during the data collection phase, by interrupting the interview and investigate and reply to children's individual concerns.
- In addition, interviewers shall systematically provide the contact reference for complains to all participants at the end of the interview.
- The Assessment Officer is the focal point for complaints. As such, she/he collects potential concerns and complaints and suggests an appropriate approach to be undertaken by the Field Coordinator as line manager, including disciplinary measures – from formal warning to dismissal of the Interviewer involved.

### Urgent action cases

- While interviewers are not asking about abuse, in light of legislation, if there is evidence of abuse occurring, it will have to be reported in accordance with the law to the judicial authorities.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF MINORS**

### **Reserachers must:**

- maintain upright moral and professional conduct;
- recognise the equal dignity of all minors and interact with them accordingly, regardless of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion or personal and social situation;
- encourage minors to participate in a way that also helps them develop their capacity for self-protection;
- recognise and conform to the implicit codes of various cultures in terms of family privacy and dignity;
- dress appropriately;
- report all cases of abuse, in compliance with the internal procedures and with those laid down by existing legislation.

### **Reserachers must not:**

- exhibit behaviours that set a bad example to minors;
- act in ways that may place minors at risk of exploitation, maltreatment or abuse;

- tolerate illegal or abusive behaviour towards minors, or behaviour that puts their safety at risk;
- behave towards minors in a discriminatory, humiliating or offensive way;
- behave towards minors in a way that is ambiguous or provocative, also in the sexual sphere;
- behave towards minors in a way that might in any way impede their healthy personal and socio-relational development;
- conduct relationships with children that can be interpreted as constituting exploitation, maltreatment or abuse;
- use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language in the presence of minors;
- use personal online communication (email, chat, social networks etc.) for the purpose of exploiting or molesting minors;
- give a minor money or any other item outside the parameters and scope of the project-based activities, or without the knowledge of one's own supervisor.

### **MONITORING and control**

The project leader ensure that all researchers working on the project respect the regulations and principles of this Code of Conduct, and must report any non-compliant behaviour.

In order to minimize abuse, harm and liability, the Secretary-General of the Foundation establishes and maintains a system to monitor the application of the present code and all related documents.

### **AGREEMENT AND ADHERENCE TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Name and surname of the collaborator

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_