

***KULA VYEMA  
CENTRE OF FOOD  
ECONOMICS***

KVC/CCEP/013/2024

**CODE OF  
CONDUCT  
AND  
ETHICS  
POLICY**



**KULA VYEMA CENTRE**  
**— OF FOOD ECONOMICS —**

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## **CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS POLICY**

**Published by Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics**

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## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Objective of the Code of Conduct and Ethics

The purpose of this code of conduct is to foster a culture of integrity, honesty, and respect within Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics. It outlines the standards and expectations for behavior among members, employees, or contractors of the company. It ensures that all activities align with the relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards. It ensures that the rights, safety and well-being of Kula Vyema Centre employees and its visitors are safeguarded. It helps in ensuring that all individuals are held accountable for their own actions and decisions. It fosters a respectful, inclusive environment where all individuals are valued regardless of background, race, sex, age, identity, or status. It offers a framework for addressing and resolving conflicts or grievances in a fair and transparent manner.

### 1.2 Definitions

**Code of Conduct:** A set of principles and standards of behavior expected from employees, volunteers, and representatives of an organization, designed to foster an ethical and professional environment.

**Employee:** Shall be used to mean an individual employed by or working for Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics.

**Contractors:** Refers to any individual engaged by Kula Vyema Centre on a contractual basis. For the purposes of this policy, the term also includes consultants.

**Professional Conduct:** Expected standards of behavior in the workplace, including respectful behavior, confidentiality, compliance with laws and regulations, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

**Workplace Environment:** The conditions and practices necessary to ensure a safe, healthy, and respectful work environment, including adherence to health and safety rules and prohibition of substance abuse. The workplace environment

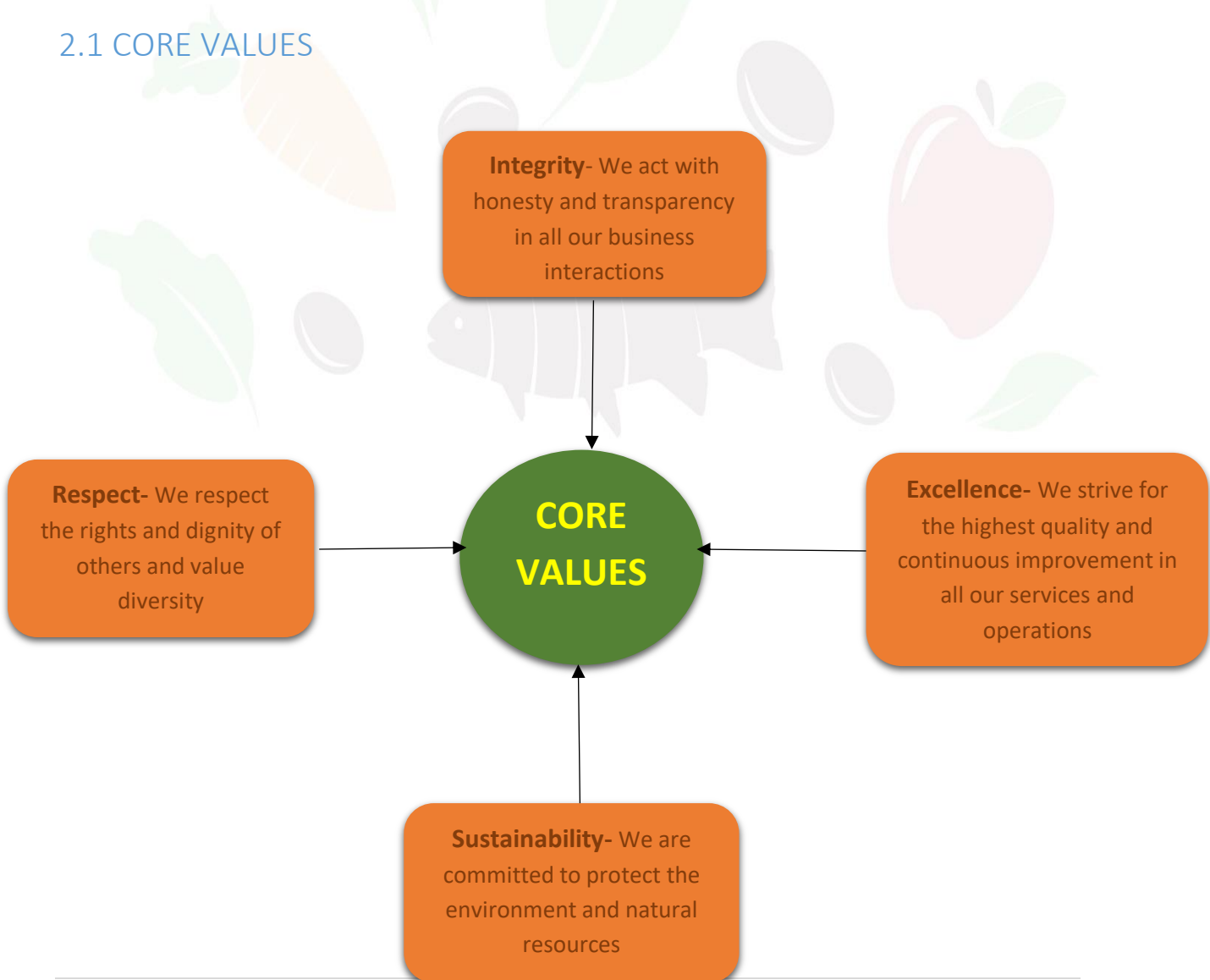
includes either the office, fieldwork, or any place an employee/consultant is on official duties.

### 1.3 Scope

This Code applies to all employees, consultants, and anyone with a contractual relationship with the organization. It governs their actions and responsibilities both within and outside the workplace, including personal conduct, participation in external employment or activities, and even after their employment ends.

## PART TWO: OUR VALUES, MISSION AND VISION

### 2.1 CORE VALUES





**Integrity-** We demonstrate honesty, openness, and adherence to strong ethical standards in all our business interactions.

**Respect-** We embrace diversity, honoring the dignity of others, and creating a supportive and inclusive workplace environment.

**Excellence-** We are dedicated to maintaining top quality standards in all our services and research activities, fostering innovation and creativity while ensuring accuracy, consistency, and integrity in our data processes. This commitment fosters trust and supports informed decision-making, as quality data is crucial to our success.

**Sustainability-** We are dedicated to adopting eco-friendly practices and making decisions that support both the long-term health of the business and the environment.

## 2.2 Vision

True to its name Kula Vyema which is Kiswahili for Eating Healthy, the vision of Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics is “Healthier lives for all through better food systems and healthier diets”.

## 2.3 Mission

To generate evidence-based solutions for a better food system and healthier diets for healthier lives.

# PART THREE: REQUIREMENTS

## 3.1 Professional Conduct

An employee shall:

- i. Treat colleagues, clients, and partners with respect and courtesy.
- ii. Avoid using any language that may be considered offensive or unprofessional.

- iii. Refrain from engaging in disruptive, threatening, discriminative, or harassing behavior, as well as any actions that could cause harm to oneself, others, or property.
- iv. Respect and protect confidential information. Do not disclose sensitive information or data without proper authorization.
- v. Adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies.
- vi. Avoid situations where personal interests may conflict with the interests of the organization. Disclose any potential conflicts of interest to a supervisor.
- vii. Exhibit highest ethical and professional standards when representing the company.
- viii. Observe official working hours and not be absent without proper authorization or reasonable cause.
- ix. Representatives must uphold Kula Vyema Centre's reputation and avoid actions or statements that could legally compromise the organization or reflect negatively on its values.

### 3.2 Workplace Environment

- i) At Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics, we ensure that we follow all health and safety regulations and practices to ensure a safe work environment.
- ii) The use of illegal drugs or alcohol at the workplace or while on official duty is strictly prohibited. All employees should be mindful of substance use and its impact on their performance and safety.
- iii) While working, one must not possess, use or be under the influence of alcohol, inhalants or drugs, sell, buy, transfer or distribute drugs.
- iv) Employees should use organizational resources (e.g. company vehicles, financial advances, computers, internet, desks, chairs, tablets etc.) responsibly and only for their intended purposes.

### 3.3 Ethical Behavior

- ✓ Honesty: Be honest and transparent in all communications and transactions.
- ✓ Integrity in Reporting: Report any unethical behavior, violations of the Code, or other concerns promptly and accurately.

- ✓ Financial Integrity: Handle organizational finances with honesty and in accordance with established procedures.

### 3.4 Dressing Code

- i. Professional Appearance: Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is professional and appropriate for their roles. Attire should be clean, well-maintained, and suitable for a business environment.
- ii. Employees may wear relaxed attire, provided it is neat and maintains a professional appearance. This includes combining relaxed items with standard professional attire such as shirts and blouses. Casual wears should be free of excessive rips or graphics, and attire should not be overly informal or disruptive e.g. tights, sleeveless, sweatpants, cleavage-showing tops or excessive ragged jeans
- iii. Health and Religious Accommodations: Kula Vyema Centre will accommodate dress code adjustments for health-related or religious reasons, provided that requests are communicated to Human Resources in advance.
- iv. Employees who do not adhere to the dress code may be asked to modify their attire or sent home to change. Repeated non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

### 3.5 Sexual Harassment

(i) Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether through words or actions. It is not about mutual attraction but rather inappropriate and unacceptable behavior directed toward an employee or visitor of Kula Vyema Centre.

(ii) Sexual harassment is a serious matter that damages morale and negatively impacts employees' ability to reach their full potential within the company. This behavior is unacceptable, and all complaints will be addressed fairly and promptly. Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in sexual harassment towards contractors/consultants, visitors, the public, or other employees.



(iii) The term "sexual harassment" in subsection (ii) includes the following actions if the perpetrator knows or should reasonably know that the behavior is unwelcome:

- a) Requesting or pressuring someone for sexual activity or favors.
- b) Engaging in deliberate or careless physical contact of a sexual nature.
- c) Engaging in gestures, sounds, jokes, or remarks, including insinuations, related to someone else's sexuality.

**Prohibition of Sexual Relationships-** At Kula Vyema Centre, sexual relationships between employees, or with clients, partners, or contractors, are prohibited to maintain professional integrity and prevent conflicts of interest. Such relationships can create perceptions of bias, harassment, or discomfort, undermining a respectful work environment. This policy aligns with legal and ethical standards, prevents undue influence, and ensures the protection of all employees. Any violations should be reported to HR and appropriate disciplinary actions shall be taken as necessary.

### 3.6 Illegal Activities

Illegal activity refers to any conduct that violates national, country or state, or local laws, in Kenya or any other place a staff has gone for official duty, or regulations applicable to Kula Vyema Centre's operations. This includes, but is not limited to:

**Fraud:** Engaging in deceitful practices, including falsification of records, financial misrepresentation, or deceptive business practices.

**Theft:** Stealing, misappropriating, or embezzling property or resources belonging to the organization or others.

**Bribery and Corruption:** Offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting bribes or improper payments to influence business decisions.

**Harassment and Discrimination:** Engaging in illegal harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, nationality, or other protected characteristics.

**Drug and Substance Abuse:** Use or possession of illegal drugs or controlled substances in the workplace.

**Violence and Threats:** Engaging in violent behavior, threats, or intimidation that endangers others or disrupts the workplace.

Engaging in illegal activities may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or engagement. Legal action may also be pursued depending on the nature of the activity and applicable laws.

Individuals involved in illegal activities may face criminal prosecution, civil penalties, or other legal consequences in addition to disciplinary actions by the organization.

### 3.7 Conflict of Interest

- i) Employees must make every effort to avoid situations where their personal interests may conflict with their official responsibilities.
- ii) In line with subsection (i), employees are prohibited from holding shares or having any other interests in a corporation or partnership that could create such a conflict.
- iii) Employees are prohibited from working for other organizations while in active employment with Kula Vyema Centre, unless with explicit authority from their supervisor
- iv) Any employee whose personal interests conflict with their official duties must:
  - a. Disclose their personal interests to their superior or another appropriate authority and follow any instructions given to resolve the conflict.
  - b. Abstain from participating in any discussions or decision-making related to the matter;
  - c. Ensure that their abstention is officially documented during such discussions.

- v) For the purposes of this section, "personal interest" includes the interests of a spouse, relative, or business associate.
- vi) The company shall establish and maintain a register of conflicts of interest.

## PART FOUR: COMPLIANCE WITH RULES, LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### 4.1 Accountability for Non-Compliance with the Code

Any staff member found in violation of this Code, related policies, or local laws may face disciplinary action, which could include dismissal or contract termination. In cases of serious violations, the matter may also be referred to local authorities for potential criminal prosecution.

### 4.2 Compliance Whistleblower

Kula Vyema Centre of Food Economics prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers. Any form of retaliation, including dismissal, demotion, or harassment, is subject to disciplinary action. The Code, our policies and other applicable laws and regulations prohibit retaliation against anyone who reports a concern or who cooperates in an ethics investigation.

### 4.3 Grievances

An employee shall be entitled to a fair and transparent grievance procedure. The grievance process will be conducted confidentially to the extent possible, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis. HR will maintain records of all grievances and their resolutions to ensure proper documentation and to help in identifying any recurring issues.

If the employee is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal the decision by submitting a written appeal to a higher authority or an appeals committee within the specified timeframe.