

Introduction

Corruption undermines the development of a country. Services, money, and aid provided for a target group do not necessarily always arrive at the correct place. As a result costs for projects are unnecessarily high. Good governance is an important aspect of the development policy of the Dutch Government and is therefore also important for an aid organisation such as Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (Kinderpostzegels).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) announced that combating corruption is one of its spearhead activities. This led to the drafting of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions in 1997. In 2001, the Netherlands ratified this Convention and Dutch legislation has been adapted accordingly. The bribing of foreign civil servants by Dutch firms has been declared illegal under Dutch law.

Apart from the fact that Kinderpostzegels is, of course obliged, to comply with Dutch legislation (and not be guilty of bribing foreign civil servants), it is very important for the organisation that its assistance is carried out with integrity and in an ethically justifiable manner. Sponsors and donors rely on Kinderpostzegels, and trust that their donations will be spent entirely for the benefit of the target group. Corruption, bribery and fraud conflict with the principle of good governance and the high ethical standards pursued by Kinderpostzegels as an aid organisation.

Scope of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been established for employees of Kinderpostzegels and it is always provided to third parties who cooperate with Kinderpostzegels, for example project partners and suppliers. The Code of Conduct clearly states that Kinderpostzegels does not wish to be involved in any corruption and fraud practices at all, so this therefore not only extends to its dealings with foreign civil servants but local contract parties too. Kinderpostzegels expects that local contract parties act with the same integrity and consent to the Code of Conduct being applicable to them.

Facilitation payments

In the explanation of the Convention, so-called facilitation payments are considered as payments that do not fall under the scope of the Convention. These are payments that are small in scope and are aimed at making government services, which the organisation can access anyway, more flexible or faster. This is in contrast to payments by which an organisation gains undeserved and unlawful advantage; such payments are prohibited by the Convention. According to the Convention facilitation payments remain an undesirable phenomenon. But, as the OECD states, in areas where matters are not regulated adequately, facilitation payments to make the administrative machinery run properly are frequently inevitable. As an example the OECD mentions the customs clearing of a container of perishable merchandise in a port. In such situations the public official concerned is not acting in contravention of his official duty and there is no improper competition advantage pursued.

The policy of Kinderpostzegels is that facilitation payments are also prohibited. Kinderpostzegels thus goes further than the Convention. Only in cases of force majeure does Kinderpostzegels - following the OECD - consider facilitation payments justified. There must be a force majeure or another emergency situation and there must be absolutely no other possible option for

Kinderpostzegels. It is, in the first instance, the programme officer who is responsible for assessing the situation. The director must always be immediately informed of such exceptional cases.

Code of Conduct

1. We do not compromise on integrity.
2. We do not engage in active or passive corruption, bribery or fraud.
3. We will avoid any conflict between our personal interests and the interests of Kinderpostzegels and will immediately report any occurrence of such conflict to our immediate superior.
4. We will ensure that our private conduct does not compromise our role as Kinderpostzegels employees.
5. We will not seek to influence, for private purposes, any person or organisation by using our position with Kinderpostzegels, nor will we offer them any personal advantage. We will not use property, facilities, services and financial resources of Kinderpostzegels for private purposes.
6. We respect the laws of the countries in which we work.
7. We will not give, elicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift or other favour for ourselves or for others that may influence the exercise of our function, performance of our duty or impair our judgement.
8. We strive for maximum openness and transparency. However, confidentiality will be applied when necessary to safeguard the rights of our partners, staff and others.
9. We will make our Code of Conduct known to our professional partners and suppliers and we expect our partners and suppliers to agree to the Code of Conduct.
10. We will respect the principles of the Code of Conduct and we will report any occurrence, or suspicion, of a breach of the Code of Conduct. We are obliged to report any suspicion or evidence of corruption, bribery or fraud committed by colleagues or others.

The contact person at Kinderpostzegels to whom a breach or suspected breach of this Code of Conduct can be reported is:

Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland
Integrity Officer and/or Safeguarding Officer
Schipholweg 97
2316 XA Leiden
The Netherlands

Phone +31 71 52598500

Email: hr@kinderpostzegels.nl

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct will have consequences. Kinderpostzegels will take immediate and appropriate action.