ANTICORRUPTION POLICY



WOPEN

Shaping Practices Influencing Policies Impacting Lives

WOPEN 2023

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1. Policy Statement

It is within WOPEN' Policy to conduct all of its business in an honest and ethical manner, taking a zero tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and then committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all business dealings and relationships, wherever WOPEN operates, and to implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery.

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WOPEN'S members are prohibited from engaging in any bribery or potential bribery and corrupt practices. This includes a prohibition against both direct bribery and indirect bribery, including payments through third parties. If any member or partner suspects or becomes aware of any potential bribery involving the Women Peace Builders Network, it is the duty of that member or partner to report their suspicion or awareness to the WOPEN Advisory Board at: Wopen25@gmail.com.

Bribery is a serious criminal offence in Cameroon in general and the regions in which WOPEN operates. Bribery offences can result in the imposition of severe fines and/or custodial sentences (imprisonment), exclusion from requesting donor funds and/or tendering for public contracts, and severe reputational damage.

WOPEN therefore take its legal responsibilities very seriously will WOPEN uphold all laws relevant to countering bribery and corruption both at national and international levels.

WOPEN as a network with media organs as members can play a paramount role in exposing corruption and initiating legal, political and penal action against it. WOPEN and its members (media organs and CSOs) unfold their respective strengths and show their limits as anti-corruption tools, depending on the different levels, which they take effect, on the audiences they address and on the broader media ecosystem on which they rely.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. Set out its responsibilities to comply with laws against bribery and corruption
- b. Provide guidance on how to recognize and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

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WOPEN will undertake a periodic bribery and corruption risk assessment across its business to understand the risks it faces and ensure that it has adequate procedures in place to address those risks. The risk assessment will be documented, periodically reviewed and the appropriate committee of the Advisory Board of WOPEN be updated on a yearly basis in accordance with applicable regulations.

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2. Some Roles WOPEN and Members Play in Fighting Corruption

- The WOPEN members can inform and educate people about the detrimental effects of corruption and through exposure, increase the political risk of those involved in corrupt practices.
- Fierce competition for audiences or beneficiaries means WOPEN members will aim to be more transparent, accountable to partners and the community they serve and trigger many policy reforms.
- Professional ethics and skills, protection from oppression and physical abuse, independence, sufficient resources and accessibility are necessary for WOPEN and its members to put in more pressure in fighting bribery and corruption both internally and externally, which all translate into an effect on anti-corruption efforts.

3. Policy Compliance

This policy applies to all Advisory Board, national/regional coordination, members, partners and consultants working with WOPEN either at national or at the regions in Cameroon.

In this policy, third party means any individual or institution/organization that a WOPEN member may come into contact with during the course of its engagement with WOPEN and includes actual and potential clients, customers, suppliers, distributors, business contacts, agents, advisers, government and public bodies including their advisors, representatives and officials, politicians and political parties.

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4. Definitions

1) Bribery

a) The offer, promise or receipt of any gift, hospitality, loan, fee, reward or other advantage to induce or reward behaviour which is dishonest, illegal or a breach of trust, duty, good faith or impartiality in the performance of a person's functions or activities (including but not limited to, a person's public functions, activities in their employment or otherwise in connection with a business); or

b) The offer or promise of any gift, hospitality, loan, fee, reward or other advantages to a public official with the intention of influencing the performance of their public function in order to obtain a business advantage.

Bribery includes not only direct payments, but also authorizing or permitting an associate or third party to commit any of the acts or take any part in the actions identified in (a) and (b) above.

2) Corruption

a) The illegal use of entrusted power for private gain.

This means the illegal use of power or a position for private advantage. Bribery involves promising, offering or giving something of value to someone who has influence or is otherwise employed in business (such as managers, buyers, other employees, representatives or journalists) or in government or public enterprises (such as politicians, public officers, other public officials or employees of public bodies or enterprises) in order to illegally obtain a private or operational advantage or to influence decision making in an illegal way.

'Something of value' includes money, but may also include, for example:

- Gifts, entertainment, travel expenses or goods;
- the giving of advantages or services; or
- Any other tangible or intangible thing that has value to the recipient.

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Bribery and corruption can take place both by direct contact between a Wopen representative and another party, as well as by indirect contact through a third party such as an agent, intermediary or even a family member or friend. This behaviour is also prohibited under this policy.

5. Unacceptable Acts or Practices

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It is not acceptable to:

- a) Give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality to secure or award an improper business advantage;
- b) Give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to facilitate, expedite, or reward any action or procedure;
- c) Accept payment from a third party knowing or suspecting it is offered with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them;
- d) Induce another individual or associate to indulge in any of the acts prohibited in this policy;
- e) Threaten or retaliate against another associate who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy;
- f) Give or accept any gift where such gift is or could reasonably be perceived to be a contravention of this policy and / or applicable law; or
- g) Engage in any activity that might lead to a breach of this policy.

6. Gifts and Hospitality

This policy does not prohibit normal business hospitality, so long as it is reasonable, appropriate, modest, and bona fide corporate hospitality, and if its purpose is to improve our company image, present our products and services, or establish cordial relations.

Gifts and Hospitality:

• <u>Must be duly approved</u>. Normal business hospitality must always be approved at the appropriate level of Wopen management.

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• Must not be intended to improperly influence. Wopen members should always assess the purpose behind any hospitality or entertainment. Hospitality or entertainment with the intention of improperly influencing anyone's decision-making or objectivity, or making the recipient feel unduly obligated in any way, should never be offered or received. Members and employees should always consider how the recipient is likely to view the hospitality. Similarly employees and members must also decline any invitation or offer of hospitality or entertainment when made with the actual or apparent intent to influence their decisions.

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- <u>Must not have the appearance of improper influence</u>. Gifts can in some cases influence, or appear to influence decision-making, for example by persuading the recipient to favour the person who made the gift over his/her own employer. Members or any other associates should think very carefully before making, or receiving, gifts. Gifts can occasionally be offered to celebrate special occasions (for example religious holidays or festivals or the birth of a child) provided such gifts do not exceed 25,000 FCFA in value, and are occasional, appropriate, totally unconditional (case of social event), and in-fitting with local business practices. No gift should be given or accepted if it could reasonably be seen improperly to influence the decision-making of the recipient.
- Certain gifts are always prohibited. Some types of gifts are never acceptable including gifts that are illegal or unethical, or involve cash or cash equivalent (e.g. loans, etc). Furthermore, by way of non-exhaustive example, an invitation to his/her family to join him on a foreign business trip, or the extension of a trip at the customer's expense to include a holiday, are at all times unacceptable, and associates should not participate in such practices.
- Modest promotional gifts are permitted. It is acceptable to offer modest promotional
 materials to contacts e.g. branded pens. Use of one's position with the WOPEN to solicit a
 gift of any kind is not acceptable. However, the WOPEN allows employees or others

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occasionally to receive unsolicited gifts of a very low intrinsic value from business contacts provided the gift is given unconditionally and not in a manner that could influence any decision-making process.

Personal payment does not cure. Employees or members may never pay on their personal
account for gifts or hospitality in order to avoid this policy.

In some cultures, / countries, it may be seen as an insult to reject a gift and refusals may adversely affect business relationships. In these circumstances, and if the gift is anything other than moderate, the gift should be reported to the Executive Director (national secretariat) or Coordinator (regional coordination) who will decide whether such gift will be retained or returned. If your Executive Director or Coordinator (Manager) is uncertain how to treat the gift, s/he should seek clarification from his/her relevant superior contact (board president and Executive director respectively).

Gifts and Hospitality can put WOPEN at risk if used to facilitate unethical business practices. The Women Peace Network will develop procedures for giving and receiving gifts and hospitality, which will seek to ensure that employees act ethically and otherwise comply with the Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy and Code of Ethical Business Code when giving and receiving gifts and / or hospitality. These procedures must be followed by employees.

7. Facilitation Payments and Kickbacks

The WOPEN prohibits making or accepting, facilitation payments or "kickbacks" of any kind. Facilitation payments are typically small, unofficial payments made to secure or expedite a routine action by an official. Kickbacks are typically payments made in return for a business favour or advantage. All employees and/or members must avoid any activity that might lead to a facilitation payment or kickback being made or accepted.

If you are asked to make a payment on behalf of the WOPEN, you must consider the purpose of the payment and whether the amount requested is proportionate to the goods or services provided.

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Any request for a facilitation payment should be refused unless you feel you are at risk of injury, of detention, or for your life, if you refuse. If one of these exceptions applies, a receipt should be obtained and the matter reported, as soon as possible, to the appropriate quarters.

8. Donations

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The WOPEN may make donations but only if they are ethical and in compliance with this policy, local applicable laws. No donation should be made which may be perceived to breach applicable law, or any other section of this policy. All donations must be approved by the Director of Coordinator and WOPEN shall keep accurate records of all their donations made.

9. Third Parties

Third parties can put the Women Peace Network at risk if they do not follow ethical business practices. For that reason, WOPEN will develop procedures for conducting appropriate risk-based due diligence on third parties, and the implementation of appropriate steps to address any identified risks, to ensure compliance with applicable anti-corruption laws. Employees must carefully follow the procedures that are established under this policy.

10. Responsibilities of Employees/Staff

Employees/staff must ensure that they have read and understood this policy and must at all times comply with the terms and conditions of this policy. Prevention, detection and reporting of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for and with WOPEN or are under WOPEN'S control. Staff/employees are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest a breach of this policy. Employees/staff must notify their line manager or consult an appropriate member of the Board of Directors as soon as possible if they believe or suspect, or have a reason to believe or suspect that a breach of this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future - for example, if a customer or potential customer offers an employee something to gain a business advantage with

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WOPEN or indicates to an employee that a gift or payment is required to secure their business. Some examples of "red flags" that may indicate corruption include but limited to:

If you encounter any red flags you must report them promptly by following the procedure set out in the Annex:

- a. Being aware that a third party engages in, or has been accused of engaging in improper business practices.
- b. Learning that a third party has a reputation for paying bribes, or requiring that bribes are paid to them, or has a reputation for having a "special relationship" with foreign government officials.
- c. A third party insists on receiving a commission or fee payment before committing to sign up to a contract or carry out a government function or process.
- d. A third party requests payment in cash and/or refuses to sign a formal commission or fee agreement, or to provide an invoice or receipt for a payment made.
- e. A third party requests that payment is made to a country or geographic location different from where the third party resides or conducts business.
- f. A third party requests an unexpected additional fee or commission to "facilitate" a service.
- g. A third party demands lavish entertainment or gifts before commencing or continuing contractual negotiations or provision of services.
- h. A third party requests that a payment is made to "overlook" potential legal violations.
- A third party requests that you provide employment or some other advantage to a friend or relative.
- j. You receive an invoice from a third party that appears to be non-standard or customized.
- k. A third party insists on the use of side letters or refuses to put terms agreed in writing.

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- Observe that WOPEN has been invoiced for a commission or fee payment that appears
 large compared to the service stated to have been provided
- m. A third party requests or requires the use of an agent, intermediary, consultant, distributor or supplier that is not typically used by or known to WOPEN.

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n. You are offered an unusually generous gift or lavish hospitality by a third party.

Please note that a failure to report an actual or suspected breach of this policy is itself a breach of this policy. Any employee/staff that breaches any of the terms of this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. WOPEN reserves its right to terminate a contractual relationship with other members and other associated persons, as the case may be if they breach any of the terms and conditions of this policy.

11.Record Keeping

WOPEN will keep financial records and have appropriate internal controls in place which will evidence the business reason for making payments to, and receiving payments from, third parties. Employees/staff must declare and keep a written record of all hospitality or gifts accepted or offered, which will be subject to managerial review and/or a review from the appropriate quarters of WOPEN.

Employees/staff must ensure that all expense claims relating to hospitality, gifts or expenses incurred to third parties are submitted in accordance with the WOPEN'S applicable policy and specifically record the reason for such expenditure.

Employees/staff shall further ensure that all expense claims shall comply with the terms and conditions of this policy.

All accounts, invoices, memoranda and other documents and records relating to dealings with third parties, such as clients, suppliers and business contacts, should be prepared and maintained with strict accuracy and completeness.

No records shall ever be kept "off-book" to facilitate or conceal improper payments.

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12. Raising a Concern or Complaint

Employees/staff are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion of malpractice at the earliest possible stage. If you are unsure whether a particular act constitutes bribery or corruption, you should raise the matter with the National or Regional Coordination or better still consult an appropriate member of the Advisory Board.

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Concerns should be reported by following the procedure set out in the Annex.

13. Steps to take if you are a Victim of Bribery and Corruption

If you are offered a bribe by a third party, or if you are asked to make a bribe, or if you suspect that you may be asked to commit such a violation, or if you believe that you or anyone else is a victim of any form of unlawful activity, you must comply with this policy.

14. Protection and Reporting Violation

Employees who refuse to accept or offer a bribe, or those who raise concerns or report another's wrongdoing, are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. WOPEN encourages openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

WOPEN is committed to ensuring that no one suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of refusing to take part in corruption, or because of reporting concerns under this policy in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavorable treatment connected with raising a concern.

If you believe that you have suffered any detrimental treatment as a result of refusing to take part in corruption, or because of reporting concerns under this policy in good faith, you should inform you're the National Coordinator or Regional Coordinator of or a member of the Advisory Board of WOPEN immediately. If the matter is not remedied, and if you are an associate, you should

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raise the matter by following the procedure laid out in the Annex. However, any complain or concern reported shall carefully be investigated in order to take actions.

15. Training, Communication, and Engagement of Third Parties and Due Diligence

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Dissemination of this policy for new employees or members shall be carried out at the time of induction. This policy will also be shared with all existing employees and members. If you have any query about this policy, you should contact the Executive Director or Regional Coordinator or member of Advisory Board of WOPEN.

The WOPEN'S zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption should be communicated to all employees, agents, suppliers, contractors and business partners at the outset of the WOPEN'S business relationship with them and as appropriate thereafter. Wherever possible, all third parties should be sent a copy of this policy at the outset of the business relationship.

16. Responsible Authority of the Policy

The board of directors has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with the legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under WOPEN'S control comply with it.

The National Coordinator of WOPEN'S National Coordination and the Regional Coordinators of WOPEN'S regional coordination have primary day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy. Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring that those reporting to them are made aware of and understand this policy and, if necessary and appropriate, are given adequate and regular training on it.

17. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

The National Coordinator of WOPEN'S National Coordination and the Regional Coordinators of the WOPEN regional coordination will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

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Any improvement identified will be made and incorporated as soon as possible. Internal control systems and procedures will be subject to regular audits to provide assurance that they are effective in countering bribery and corruption.

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All employees, agents and members are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

Staff, members and/or other agents are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved.

Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the National/Regional Coordinator who will in turn share with WOPEN Advisory Board members as required. This policy does not form part of the employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time by WOPEN.

18.Examples of Bribery and Corrupt Practices

This section contains a list of examples of prohibited bribery and corruption. It is not intended to be exhaustive and is for illustrative purposes only.

• Offering a Bribe

You offer a potential customer tickets to a major event, but only if they agree to do business with us. This would be an offence (by you) as you are making the offer to gain an improper commercial and contractual advantage. WOPEN may also be found to have committed an offence because the offer has been made improperly to obtain business. It may also be an offence for the potential customer to accept the offer (ticket).

• Receiving a Bribe

A supplier gives your nephew a job, but makes it clear that in return this supplier expect you to use your influence in WOPEN to ensure the supplier continues to do business with WOPEN.



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It is an offence for a supplier to make such an offer. It would be an offence for you (manager, etc) to accept the offer as you would be doing so to gain an improper personal advantage.

• Bribing A Foreign Official

You arrange for the business to pay an additional payment to a foreign official to speed up an administrative process, such as clearing computer hardware through customs. The offence of bribing a foreign public official has been committed as soon as the offer is made. This is because it is made to gain a business advantage for Wopen. Wopen may also be found to have committed an offence.

19. Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the reporter if he/she wishes. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as results of her/his disclosure without her/his help, so reporter may be asked to come forward as a witness. If reporter agrees to this, s/he will be offered advice and support.

20.Anonymous Allegations

This Policy encourages the reporter to put her/his name to her/his allegation whenever possible. If s/he does not tell Wopen who s/he is it will be much more difficult for Wopen to protect her/his position or to give her/him feedback. This policy is not ideally suited to concerns raised anonymously.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they may be considered at the discretion of the Secretariat or Board. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised
- the credibility of the concern, and

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• the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources

21. Untrue Allegations

If a reporter makes an allegation in good faith and reasonably believing it to be true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, the Executive Director, or Regional Coordinator will recognize the concern and reporter has nothing to fear. If however, a reporter makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action may be taken.

22. How to Raise a Concern

A reporter may raise her/his concern by telephone, in person or in writing. The earlier s/he expresses her/his concern, the easier it is to take action. S/he will need to provide the following information:

- the nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true
- the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates)

Although s/he is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of her/his suspicion, s/he will needs to demonstrate to the person contacted that s/he has a genuine concern relating to suspected wrongdoing or malpractice and there are reasonable grounds for her/his concern.

S/he may wish to consider discussing her/his concern with a colleague first and s/he may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of staff who have had the same experience or concerns.

S/he may invite her/his trade union, professional association representative or a friend to be present for support during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns s/he has raised



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Annex 1: Concern Reporting Form

Please provide the following details for any suspected serious misconduct or any breach or suspected breach of law or regulation that may adversely impact the Company. Please note that you may be called upon to assist in the investigation, if required.

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Reporter's contact Information	
(This section may be left blank if the reporter wish to remain anonymous)	
Name*	
Designation	
Department/Institution	
Contact Number	
E-mail Address*	
Suspect's Information	
Name*	
Designation	
Department/Institution	
Contact Number	
E-mail Address*	
Witnesses' Information (if any)	
Name*	
Designation	
Department/Institution	
Contact Number	
E-mail Address*	

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COMPLAINT: Briefly describe the misconduct / improper activity and how you know about it. Specify what, who, when, where and how. If there is more than one allegation, number each allegation and use as many pages as necessary.

1. What misconduct / improper activity occurred?*

2. Who committed the misconduct / improper activity?*

3. When did it happen and when did you notice it?*

4. Where did it happen?*

5. Is there any evidence that you could provide us?

6. Are there any other parties involved other than the suspect stated above?

7. Do you have any other details or information which would assist us in the investigation?

8. Any other comments?

Date:

Signature: