

Ethical framework

Better Shelter



Valid from	18 March 2025
Aim	This document sets the ethical framework to guide us in our decisions and actions
Applicable to	All employees and other contracted individuals
Approved by	Managing Director, Better Shelter

1. Introduction

Better Shelter RHU AB is fully owned by *the Housing for All Foundation* whose purpose, as stated in the statutes, is:

to engage in relief work [...] which contribute to better housing and sustainable development for the millions of people who lose their homes during conflicts and natural disasters and/or are affected by poverty. The Foundations entire capital and return shall be used to fulfil the purpose and objectives.

The vision of Better Shelter is:

A world in which all people have a safe and dignified place to call home.

The overall objective of Better Shelter is:

Millions of people have their need for safe, dignified, and sustainable shelters, classrooms and clinics covered.

This document outlines the Better Shelter Principles, Values and Code of conduct and should describe our purpose and guide us in our decisions and actions. It applies to all employees and consultants – regardless of employment form and length, during the entirety of the employment or contracting period.

The principles serve as a foundation for ethical and moral decision-making and behaviour.

The Values describe *how we want* to work and behave, internally and externally. They are included in individual, team, project, and organisational objectives and followed up on a regular basis.

The code of conduct is a specific set of rules outlining expected behaviours and standards when working for Better Shelter. They shall give a clear guidance for decision-making and actions.

2. Principles

The principles serve as a foundation for ethical and moral decision-making and behaviour.

We at Better Shelter are to be guided by the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence¹.

Humanity: Human suffering must be alleviated wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable

Impartiality: Humanitarian aid must be provided solely based on need, without discrimination

Neutrality: Humanitarian aid must not favour any side in armed conflicts or other dispute

Independence: Humanitarian objectives must be autonomous from political, economic, military, or other bias

Aware that our impact is relatively small in comparison to the need; that we primarily work through implementing partners to reach the people who need shelter; and that we rely on a limited number of financial donors to support our work; we have chosen that these principles must be adhered to in all our work and should guide us in both strategic and operational decision making.

¹ These principles are rooted in international humanitarian law, incorporated in the Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as well as the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (included in the Sphere Standards).

3. Values

The Values describe *how we want* to work and behave, internally and externally. They are included in individual, team, project, and organisational objectives and shall be followed up on in performance appraisals, salary dialogues and other individual development meetings as well as on team, project and organisational levels. Our values are:

Be nice / Assume responsibility / Remain curious

3.1. Be nice

We are nice. We treat everyone with respect, listen to their perspectives, and strive to understand their reasoning. We may not always agree, but we value open dialogue and mutual respect. Our focus is on helping others—both inside and outside the organisation. We collaborate openly, share knowledge, support each other, and step in when needed. We also value partnerships, working with organisations and people who help us achieve our mission.

3.2. Assume responsibility

We assume responsibility. If something needs to be done, we do it—whether it's helping a colleague, supporting a partner organisation, or ensuring more people receive assistance. And in return, we expect the same responsibility from our peers. We act with integrity, follow through on commitments, and take initiative. We collaborate, ask for help when needed, and lead by example. Our actions align with our words, and we stay grounded in our shared purpose.

3.3. Remain curious

We are curious. We seek better ways to work—staying open to innovation, creative solutions, and learning from failure. Simplifying processes, for displaced people and ourselves, is at the heart of what we do. We are solution-oriented, willing to try, learn, and improve. We celebrate success and highlight great work. Whether designing shelters or supporting a colleague, we keep people at the centre of our decisions. Our service mindset extends to displaced people, colleagues, partners, and suppliers.

4. Code of conduct

The code of conduct is a specific set of rules outlining expected behaviours and standards when working for Better Shelter. They shall give a clear guidance, a practical tool, for guidance in decision-making's and actions.

4.1. Initial statement

We should always behave in such a way as to maintain confidence and trust in us as professionals and of the organisation. We must respect the ethical framework and the organisational values. On assignments abroad, we represent Better Shelter both during and after working hours, so the following rules apply throughout the travel, whether on duty or not.

We are aware that anyone who violates the Code of Conduct can be called home from an international assignment and be subject to disciplinary measures.

Swedish criminal law applies even when we are on international assignments, whether the act is a criminal offence in the country or not. Similarly, we may not carry out acts that are punishable abroad – even if the act does not constitute a crime in Sweden.

4.2. Rules of behaviour

We are aware that our profession, the organisation we represent, and other traits can put us in a position of power, which we may not abuse.

4.2.1. Discrimination

We must not discriminate. Our actions and behaviours should always be made regardless of status, including gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion or other belief, functional variation, sexual orientation, or age.

4.2.2. Harassment

No form of racism, bullying, threats, violence, intimidation, or other type of harassment is tolerated.

4.2.3. Sexual harassment and abuse

No types of sexual harassment and abuse is tolerated. Sexual harassment is behaviour of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity. In addition to

comments and words, it can include, for example, groping or leering. It can also include unwelcome compliments, innuendos, text messages and pictures of a sexual nature. It is the person affected who determines whether the behaviour is unwelcome.

4.2.4. Sexual relationships, prostitution

Buying or selling sex, trafficking, or similar is not allowed. We should avoid visiting areas where sexual services are offered. Having sexual relations with anyone in a position of dependency is not allowed, as this may put you, the mission and/or the organisation in danger. Having sexual relations with a minor (under 18) is not allowed.

4.2.5. Corruption and organised crime

Corruption means taking advantage of a position to obtain undue gain – for oneself or others. It can be done for a fee (a bribe) or without a fee, known as cronyism or friendly corruption. We are therefore careful and cautious about receiving or giving gifts and favours. This applies irrespective of whether it can be considered to affect the performance of our duties or not.

We shall always make decisions based on what is in the best interest of the people we are trying to help and of the organisation. Decisions shall never be based on personal considerations or relationships.

We will avoid contact with organised crime in all its forms. We are aware that organised crime can also occur in everyday situations, such as currency exchange, housing choices and trade.

4.2.6. Other conflicts of interest

Any employment outside of Better Shelter, with or without compensation, must not influence a co-worker's job performance. We may not engage in outside activities that divert time and attention away from our personal work responsibilities or require work during company time.

Any service on a board of directors or similar body of any enterprise or institution is not permitted if it creates a conflict of interest. All outside professional service must be approved by your immediate manager and the manager's manager.

4.2.7. Alcohol and narcotics

The use of any narcotic is not allowed, unless with medical prescription and unless it does not interfere with national legislation. We may not be under the influence of alcohol during normal working hours and should in general be restrictive with using alcohol, aware that alcohol may influence our judgment and behaviour in a negative way; is not always culturally acceptable and may be unnecessarily tempting to people who are trying to avoid alcohol consumption. In cases of representation, and after normal working hours, alcohol may be consumed in moderation, but nobody should be pressured to consume alcohol.

4.2.8. Right of association

Better Shelter respects every co-worker's right to freedom of association and preference within the institutional and recognised co-worker associations. We respect co-workers' right to join, form, or not to join a co-worker association of their choice, without fear of reprisal, interference, intimidation, or harassment.

4.2.9. Assets

Tools, such as office equipment, IT systems, software, and other assets – shall only be used for conducting Better Shelter activities. The Better Shelter logo is an asset of the organisation and can only be used in ways intended. We must comply with the communication guidelines of the organisation, and any potential reputational risk on the Better Shelter brand must be considered in all our activities and actions.

Any co-worker with access to confidential information, such as financial or technical information, employee information, business plans, grants, etc. shall always safeguard this information and refrain from unauthorised disclosure, always acting in accordance with the employment agreement and relevant laws.

4.2.10. Social media

We must follow the communication guidelines of Better Shelter. We are aware that posting images online from places we visit may be used in ways we have not intended, and that images could affect the reputation and/or security of the people we assist, our partner organisations, ourselves or our organisation. We therefore exercise caution when posting images online.

5. Compliance

Always consult with your manager if you are uncertain how to act in accordance with the Ethical framework. Any violation – whether suspected or actual – against the framework should be reported to your direct manager, to the Managing Director of Better Shelter, the work environment representative, or the hotline below:

Johan Hallén, legal advisor/ lawyer, at Setterwalls law firm

E-mail: Johan.hallen@setterwalls.se

Phone: +46 31 701 17 00

6. Implementation

The managing director of Better Shelter is responsible for this document, though actual updating, and implementation may be delegated. The document should be discussed with all employees on a yearly basis, within the teams or in all staff sessions. All new employees must read and understand this document, and signing an employment agreement equals to agreeing to this document.