

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACTIVISTS

COLUMN TITLE		
Define the work role that the activist will be undertaking	<p>Be clear about what you can do and timescales for delivering projects.</p> <p>Include preparation and travel time in your work proposals.</p> <p>Indicate what technical or other support you need from the NGO.</p>	<p>Provide a role description including clear work objectives and deliverables.</p> <p>Clarify reporting lines and what support is available to the activist.</p> <p>Ensure that there is an appropriate manager for the activist to go to in the event of any problems.</p>
Financial management	<p>Activists undertake a lot of unpaid, volunteer work. However, when appropriate do not be afraid to ask for payment. You should not carry out work for free which organisations normally pay for.</p> <p>Be realistic when negotiating payment. Small NGOs usually have very limited budgets but there can be more flexibility in large organisations.</p> <p>It is OK to ask for payment for your skills and expertise as well as for physical labour.</p> <p>In some instances, media outlets and NGOs can also be asked for a fee to use your story and image, especially if it is being used to promote a campaign or event.</p> <p>If you write an article for a publication which normally pays contributors, then you should ask for a payment.</p>	<p>Do not expect activists to always work as volunteers and pay fairly for their contribution to projects.</p> <p>Be fair and transparent regarding any payments to activists.</p> <p>Agree reasonable travel and subsistence payments for activists, especially when their work involves significant travel away from home.</p> <p>Reimburse expenses incurred by activists to attend conferences and training courses.</p> <p>Agree with activists how and when payments will be made. Late payments can cause great stress.</p>

		<p>Activists should not be expected to write articles or provide photographs or other materials for free if other contributors are paid.</p>
<p>Sharing personal stories</p>	<p>As an activist you may be asked to share your personal story particularly if you are a survivor of FGM. This should always be your choice and do not tell your story if you do not feel safe to do so.</p> <p>Telling your story can bring back difficult memories and feelings so make sure you are supported by someone you trust.</p> <p>Before sharing your experience with an NGO or other organisation clarify how it will be used and how you will be protected from it being used in other ways which you do not agree to.</p>	<p>Activists often share their personal stories to connect with others and to help others understand the impact of FGM but they should never be expected to do so under duress or when it is not safe to do so.</p> <p>Make sure that there is support (preferably from a trained counsellor) and private space for survivors who are telling their stories at conferences and other events.</p> <p>Provide regular supervision support to activists working in your organisation especially if they are drawing on their personal experiences in their work.</p>
<p>Working remotely and keeping safe in dangerous environments</p>	<p>Tackling FGM often means travelling to remote locations and engaging with people who want to continue the practice. Always carefully assess any risks and discuss these with the NGO before agreeing to travel to potentially dangerous areas.</p> <p>Where possible do not travel alone.</p> <p>Always make sure that the NGO and trusted people who can help in case of any difficulty know your plans and make sure that you are able to easily contact them.</p> <p>Keep in regular contact if you are travelling for an extended period.</p>	<p>Support activists in undertaking thorough risk assessments for their work especially if travelling or working alone.</p> <p>Make sure activists are briefed on risks associated with their work and how to mitigate these.</p> <p>Ensure that a nominated manager keeps in touch with activists working remotely and/or travelling to potentially dangerous locations.</p> <p>Arrange for activists to travel in pairs or small groups where this is appropriate for their safety.</p>

		<p>Have clear procedures for dealing with any safety incidents including support for the activists who are affected.</p>
<p>Taking breaks and rest days</p>	<p>Plan your work so that you can take breaks during the day. Make sure you get adequate rest after busy work periods and difficult travel. Plan holidays and time with your family and friends.</p>	<p>Help activists plan healthy work schedules which allow for breaks and rest periods. Make sure activists are aware of the risks and signs of stress and burn-out.</p> <p>Provide regular supervision to check on the activists' wellbeing and that they have a good work/life balance.</p>
<p>Dealing with difficult emotional issues</p>	<p>Coping with emotional situations can be very stressful and may also bring back feelings from your own past experiences. Make sure you have trusted people who you can talk to about any difficult times or feelings. If you feel a situation is out of control or beyond your ability to cope, seek help and do not put yourself at risk. Sometimes saying no and not getting involved is the right thing to do even though it may be hard to do this. After a difficult encounter talk it through with your manager or supervisor. Try to take a break after intense emotional work to recharge your batteries and rebuild your resilience.</p>	<p>Provide training and support for activists who often face very challenging personal interactions during their work. Consider regular counselling supervision for activists working closely with survivors of FGM and other forms of abuse. Ensure activists know who to contact in your organisation for help and support with difficult situations.</p>
<p>Respecting boundaries</p>	<p>Understand your personal boundaries and use them as a guide when planning your work. Try to respect the boundaries of those you engage with during your work as an activist. Resolve any conflicts through honest communication and seeking the best solution for everyone. If you feel it is not appropriate or safe for you to do something then be clear about it and explain the situation to your manager or supervisor.</p>	<p>Provide a respectful and supportive work environment for activists. Make sure there are good practice policies and procedures to deal with any work-related conflicts.</p> <p>Communicate any changes of circumstance that affect work plans to the activists as</p>



		soon as possible and agree with them how this will be managed.
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