

Arseh Sevom: Policies

2016-2019



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1.0. ABOUT ARSEH SEVOM

Arseh Sevom (Third Sphere) is a non-governmental organization established in 2010 in Amsterdam, aiming to promote peace, democracy, and human rights. Human and civil rights belong to all sectors of society and to all individuals. Arseh Sevom promotes the advancement of rights for people of all beliefs, genders, ethnicities, non-violent political affiliations, and more. A key aim for Arseh Sevom is to work with individuals and organizations to amplify their actions and efforts in the promotion of civil society.

At the end of 2012, an independent evaluator made an extensive review of Arseh Sevom's practices and accomplishments over its first three years of operation. The evaluator spoke to a number of people affected by the organization's work. He wrote:

"Arseh Sevom was several times referred to as being and creating 'a living exercise in democracy.' This is a compliment that simultaneously includes a task and challenge for the future!"

Mission

Arseh Sevom works to create tools, resources, and opportunities for learning and collaboration that promote a capable, vibrant, and pluralistic civil society inside Iran, in the diaspora, and among related communities.

Our Vision

We envision a strengthened civil society in Iran and among related communities that is capable, pluralistic, participatory, and effective at achieving its objectives.

2.0. Management and Job descriptions

Governance, financial decision-making and operations

Arseh Sevom is constituted as per Dutch law and the Deed of Formation was developed to govern its structure and actions. This document is available upon request.

Financial and accounting practices operate under Dutch law.

Arseh Sevom works with an external accountant on an ongoing basis who oversees financial transactions, bookkeeping and any needed reconciliation.

Staff and consultants keep timesheets coded to the specific projects to which they are assigned; the codes are maintained by administrative staff and the accountant.

Timesheets are submitted monthly.

Arseh Sevom hires external auditors to review financial practices and expenditures per project and the organization as a whole.

Arseh Sevom publishes an annual report with audited financial statements.

The Executive Board of Arseh Sevom has **never** made a decision without unanimous consent. Sometimes this means decisions take more time, but when they are made, we know they will be undertaken with full support.



Executive Board (voluntary, cannot receive money from Arseh Sevom):

- Has oversight responsibilities.
- Can hire and fire the organization's Executive Director.
- Makes decisions about financial commitments.
- Signs off on payments exceeding \$10,000.
- Meets with the accountant bi-monthly to review financial commitments.
- Approves partnerships.
- Oversees contracts.
- Meets officially 4 times per year with ad hoc meetings as necessary.

Advisory Board (voluntary, but can be hired by the organization):

- Advises on programmatic issues.
- Provides programmatic support.
- Works with the Executive Board and Management Team on programmatic issues, has no binding responsibilities.
- Meets with Executive Board and Staff at least 3 times per year.

Executive Director:

- Develops and enacts organizational vision in cooperation with the Executive Board.
- Reports to the Executive Board.
- Conducts staff hiring and firing responsibilities.
- Ensures adherence to organizational ethics and policy commitments.
- Senior programmatic responsibilities including adaptive programming pending activity feedback and adjustments required for day-to-day and longer-term efforts.
- Senior fiscal responsibility.
- Senior fundraising responsibility.
- Manages teams.
- Meets with accountant monthly or more often as needed.

Program Staff:

- Provide technical input and manage programs.
- Manage program partnerships.
- Implement programs.
- Produce narrative reporting for organization-wide reports.
- Report to the Executive Director.
- Support fundraising and individual program reporting.
- Attend 1-day of each 2-day board meeting, quarterly.

Administrative Support:

- Bookkeeping and reconciliation of petty cash (no more than \$500).
- Support project oversight.
- Provide ad hoc support to Executive Director and Board.
- Attend 1-day of each 2-day board meeting, quarterly.

Arseh Sevom has the following policies in place:

- Security policy.
- Code of Conduct and conflict of interest policy.
- Fiscal management policy.
- Conflict management policy.
- Human Resources policy.



Thresholds for approval are set as follows:

- **Payments under \$1,000** - are approved by responsible person (program manager, director, admin, business officer, etc.)
- **Above \$1,000** - has to be approved by Director
- **Above \$10,000** - has to be approved by Executive Board

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Sustainability Plan

Overview of current operations

Arseh Sevom (AS) is an organization with a nuclear body of staff based in The Netherlands and a rich and diverse body of consultants, colleagues and supporters around the globe. AS is proactive about sustainability. Benefitting from a number of experts on its various bodies, the organization has a history of being creative and resilient in managing limited resources with an eye to maximize return on investment and multiply impact.

Sustaining through each project

Having reached a new stage in its development and expansion, and following its mission statement, AS maintains a policy of including an independent bespoke sustainability plan at the core of each of its project.

The objectives of each plan are:

- To find ways and means of networking with local organizations, individuals, and engaging them in a process of action and reflection that involves core project activities such as content development
- To take leadership roles to ensure that there is a sense of ownership in order to facilitate momentum for long-term involvement in civil society at the grassroots level
- To transfer knowledge to and provide tools for grassroots stakeholders in order to make them more effective

AS plans to transition the main actors and activists involved with our projects to local organizations, provide the necessary opportunities for consultation. In addition, AS is:

- Establishing a non-profit organization in the UK in order to expand its funding sources
- Initiating a crowd-funding and subscription based platform.
- Exploring other possibilities of increasing return on investment through internal and external means.

3.0. Conflicts of interests

Arseh Sevom expects that employees will perform their duties conscientiously, honestly, and in accordance with the best interests of Arseh Sevom. Employees must not use their positions or the knowledge gained as a result of their positions for private or personal advantage. Regardless of the circumstances, if employees sense that a course of action they have pursued, or are presently pursuing, or are contemplating pursuing may involve them in a conflict of interest with their employer, they should immediately communicate all the facts to their supervisor.



4.0. HUMAN RESOURCES

Code of Conduct

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unacceptable. You might be unsure what sexual harassment means. In fact, sexual harassment may seem normal if you've never stopped to think about it. We require that every member of our organization think about what sexual harassment means. Page | 5

Here are some points to consider:

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, as well as situations which create an environment that is hostile, intimidating or humiliating.

Sexual harassment can be physical, as well as verbal and non-verbal. It might happen once or multiple times.

If you are in a position of power over someone, you must be aware that your power could be seen as an implicit threat either to a person's employment or personal safety. People in power must be constantly aware of the influence their actions have on others.

Examples of conduct or behavior which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Physical conduct

- Unwelcome physical contact
- Physical violence, including sexual assault
- Physical contact, e.g. touching, pinching
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favors

Verbal conduct

- Comments on a worker's appearance, age, private life, etc.
- Sexual comments, stories and jokes
- Sexual advances
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations that imply the desire for intimacy
- Insults based on the sex of the worker
- Condescending remarks
- Sending sexually explicit messages (by phone or by email)
- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- Sexually-suggestive gestures
- Whistling
- Leering

Sexual harassment, regardless of their sex and of the sex of the harasser, may also occur between people of the same sex. What matters is that the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome by the person against whom the conduct is directed.

What to do

First: If you are subject to sexual harassment, and it is possible, inform the alleged harasser that their conduct is unwanted and unwelcome.

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Second: If that person is your supervisor, you can speak to another staff member or a board member about the activity. We will designate a person to contact.

When a designated person receives a complaint of sexual harassment, they will:

- Immediately record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s).
- Ascertain the views of the victim as to what outcome he/she wants.
- Ensure that the victim understands the company's procedures for dealing with the complaint.
- Discuss and agree the next steps: either informal or formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the victim from pursuing a formal complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the outcome.
- Keep a confidential record of all discussions.
- Respect the choice of the victim.
- Ensure that the victim knows that they can lodge the complaint outside of the organization through the relevant country/legal framework.

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Remember, we are a diverse bunch

Don't expect everyone to automatically know they are behaving in an insensitive manner. Speak up for others and point out communication that could be offensive. If you are the one addressed, you must make every effort to understand why your behavior was offensive and change it.

For instance, some people are religious, some not. Don't make statements about *all* religious people or *all* women or *all*... If it's a stereotype, avoid it.

Conflict Management

Prepare for Conflict

Every democratically run organization has conflict.

How to identify and address destructive conflict

Conflict is a necessary part of democratic communication. So, how do you identify and address destructive conflict?

Destructive conflict:

- Is personal
- Has lost sight of the problem
- Is about gaining power rather than helping others

5 things to remember to resolve conflict

1. People in conflict mirror each other's attitudes. If you feel the other person does not respect you, chances are they have the same feeling about you.
2. People in conflict mirror each other's behaviors. If you yell, the other person yells. Similarly, if you take a deep breath and think of something positive to say, so will the other person.
3. Assume the other person has good will. You are in this thing together. You are all trying to reach the same goals. Don't let yourself or others talk badly about others on your team.
4. Focus on the problem, not the person. Ask, "What do you need?" and then, "How can we both get our needs met."
5. Talk softer, say something appreciative, and compliment the other person in the conflict. Do not insult. Stay focused and respectful.

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Giving Feedback

- Give everyone feedback on how they are doing their job(s)
- Set aside periodic feedback sessions
- Give all the people involved a chance to prepare
- No more than 3 negative items at a time
- Be specific
- Focus on behavior
- Only comment on things the person can change
- Make sure positive feedback is included (no limit on positives)
- Sensitive matters should be handled sensitively and privately

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First Approach

Before approaching a supervisor, please try to work out the conflict together. If that is not possible, approach a supervisor.

The supervisor must document the approach and the discussion.

Only if the supervisor is unresponsive or unable to moderate the conflict should the designated board member be approached.