

Code of Conduct

Version	2.0	
Approved on	19.06.2024	
Approved by	Bianca Kaltschmitt, Managing Director	
Valid from	20.06.2024	
Document owner	Bianca Kaltschmitt, Managing Director	
Binding for	Governing body members, staff (regardless of the type of contract), volunteers, affiliates, representatives, contractors, and partners	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open source	<input type="checkbox"/> Only share upon approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal use only

Content

- 1. Introduction & purpose 2
- 2. Scope 2
- 3. Associated external standards 2
- 4. Code of Conduct 3
- 5. Obligations to comply 6
- 6. Reporting requirements & consequences for violations 6
- 7. Feedback & revision 7
- 8. Annex 8

1. Introduction & purpose

Our vision as Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe is a world where hardship, poverty and social injustice have been overcome and everyone can live independent, self-determined lives in dignity, peace, and safety, enjoying equal rights and maintaining harmony with the environment. Following that vision Help's work is guided by the principle of the equality of all persons. This Code of Conduct (CoC) constitutes the organizations overarching commitment policy and formulates the general principles and rules of conduct, that guide our work. With that it is the basis for the promotion of consistent behaviour within the organization and a display of the conduct to be expected for third parties. Our Code of Conduct constitutes the basis for all further policies and guidelines operationalising these general rules for the fulfilment of all organisational functions in their pursuit of our vision.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all governing body members, staff (regardless of the type of contract), volunteers, affiliates, representatives, contractors, suppliers, service providers, freelancers, and partners receiving material or non-material support from Help.

This Code of Conduct applies worldwide.

Help is committed to supporting its employees and partners to conduct themselves in accordance with its policies e.g. by offering training, training support and a high level of onboarding.

3. Associated external standards

In our commitment to follow the highest standards in all areas of our work, Help supports and ascribes to the following national and international standards and codes:

- VENRO CoC Transparency, Organisational Management and Monitoring¹
- VENRO CoC for Children's Rights: Protecting children against abuse and exploitation in development co-operation and humanitarian aid²
- VENRO CoC for Development-Related Public Relations³
- VENRO Guidelines for projects and programs in development work⁴
- Sphere Standards⁵:
 - Humanitarian Charter
 - Protection Principles
 - Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response
- The Humanitarian Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, and Independence⁶
- CHS Alliance: Core humanitarian standards⁷

¹ https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/VENRO-Dokumente/Kodex_Transparenz_3Aufl_v03.pdf

² https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/VENRO-Dokumente/Kodex_Kinderrechte_2Auflage_v01.pdf

³ https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/VENRO-Dokumente/Kodex_EBO_3aAuflage_v01.pdf

⁴ https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/VENRO-Dokumente/Leitlinien_v07_DIGITAL_2_.pdf

⁵ The Sphere Handbook 2018 | Sphere (spherestandards.org)

⁶ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/ocha-message-humanitarian-principles>

⁷ <https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>

- Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Committee of the German Federal Foreign Office: Twelve Principles of Humanitarian Assistance⁸
- European Consensus in Humanitarian Aid⁹
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief¹⁰

The following rules of conduct and commitments are based on these standards and codes in alliance with fundamental human rights and Help's vision.

4. Code of Conduct

Help expects all employees, partners, and other entities under the binding nature of this policy to observe the national and international laws to which they are subject and adhere to this Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct must also be complied with outside the workplace and working hours. When in doubt, priority is always to obey the law, even in case of conflicting instructions from supervisors or management. This code makes reference to other policies of Help, which further operationalise and detail our commitments and the procedures we have in place to ensure their fulfilment.

Integrity, accountability & respect for human dignity

1. We conduct ourselves with integrity, honesty, transparency, and accountability in all our endeavours.
2. We prioritize the well-being and care of all people. We respect the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals and are always guided by the principles of *do no harm* and acting in the best interest of the people and communities, that we serve. We make sure, that all people are portrayed respectfully in all publications and internal communication of the organization.
3. We treat all people as equals, with respect and dignity. We strive to foster an inclusive and diverse environment, where all voices are heard, valued, and respected.
4. We are accountable towards the people and communities with which we work and donors in the fulfilment of our vision and mission.
5. We are driven by the impact of our work.

Professional conduct & use of resources

6. We are all champions of Help's values, vision, and mission. We uphold high standards of professionalism, competence, and ethical conduct in all aspects of our work.
7. We continuously strive for collaboration with others and to improve our skills and knowledge to better serve the needs of the communities we work with.
8. We value collaboration and partnership as essential elements of our work, recognizing that collective action is necessary to achieve meaningful impact.
9. We engage with colleagues, partners, stakeholders, and communities in a spirit of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation.
10. We are committed to the responsible stewardship of resources and ensure that funds and resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve our mission.

⁸ <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/254382/82022a521266b5bb15e392c992e8f8d5/grundregeln-der-huhi-data.pdf>

⁹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130(01))

¹⁰ [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief - ICRC](#)

11. We conduct ourselves in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner. We understand that we are representatives of Help and ensure, that our conduct does not harm the reputation and brand of Help. That does also apply to our conduct outside the workplace and working hours.
12. We don't work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, nor operate any machinery or vehicles under the influence. We don't tolerate the possession, distribution, and consumption of illegal substances at the workplace or on the job.
13. We pursue our objectives and programs with neutrality, impartiality and without violence. We don't take part in any form of violence, carry weapons or affiliate with armed actors.
14. Help is politically independent and non-denominational. We conduct ourselves accordingly while at work.
15. We don't use equipment or resources provided by Help in activities that contravene the law or this Code of Conduct. Private use of resources of the organization is only permitted as explicitly expressed by Help. Misuse, misappropriation, or grossly negligent damage to the properties of Help or any property connected to Help's activities will not be tolerated.

- Help MEAL Policy
- Help Social Media Policy
- Help Procurement Manual
- VENRO CoC for Development-Related Public Relations
- VENRO CoC Transparency, Organisational Management and Monitoring

Diversity, non-discrimination & inclusion

16. We are dedicated to promoting equality and diversity and combating discrimination in all its forms.
17. We strive to ensure equal access to our services and opportunities, without discrimination or prejudice. This is reflected and lived throughout our programs, communication and all our HR and recruitment rules and procedures.
18. We don't tolerate discrimination, be it on the basis of age, disability, nationality, ethnicity, gender, political views, union activity, religion, culture, language, sexual orientation or other distinguishing characteristics.
19. We abstain from all kinds of discrimination, mobbing and bullying as well as any inappropriate, violent, or insulting language, whether spoken or written.

- Help Global HR Framework
- Help Gender Policy

Child protection

20. We acknowledge, that children need special care and protection. Their well-being is of utmost priority in all our projects and programs. We don't tolerate any conduct that could harm children. All persons and entities under the scope of this code must condemn any, and all forms of child abuse, act accordingly and advocate for child protection.

- VENRO CoC for Children's Rights: Protecting children against abuse and exploitation in development co-operation and humanitarian aid

Health, Safety & Security

21. We adhere to robust safety and security protocols to mitigate risks and ensure the protection of staff, volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries. We observe and follow the general and local security rules and protocols of Help and conduct ourselves in accordance with these.
22. We don't take unnecessary risks with either our own health, safety, and security or that of others. We respect each other's risk perception and tolerance.

■ Help Safety & Security Framework

Protection against sexual abuse & exploitation

23. We have zero tolerance for sexual abuse, harassment, or exploitation in any form. We commit ourselves to create an environment where the abuse of power is effectively prevented.
24. We commit to the Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the IASC and implement comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation.

■ Help Policy on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

Anti-fraud & anti-corruption

25. We strictly prohibit corruption, bribery, and any form of fraudulent behaviour.
26. We maintain robust internal controls and procedures to prevent, detect, and address corruption and fraud in all our operations.
27. We ensure transparency and accountability in all financial transactions and reporting.

■ Help Policy on anti-fraud & anti-corruption

■ Help Procurement Manual

Anti-terrorism & money laundering

28. We unequivocally reject terrorism and any form of support of or association with terrorist organizations.
29. We comply with all relevant laws and regulations and maintain high standards of internal control mechanisms aimed at preventing terrorism, money laundering or any direct or indirect support thereof. This includes screening partners, key staff, and contractors to ensure they are not engaged in terrorist activities or money laundering.
30. We maintain vigilance and report any suspicious activities or individuals to the appropriate authorities.

■ Help Policy on anti-fraud & anti-corruption

■ Help Procurement Manual

Avoiding conflict of interest

31. We identify and disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest promptly and transparently.
32. We refrain from engaging in activities or relationships that may compromise our objectivity, impartiality, or integrity.
33. We ensure that decisions and actions are based solely on the best interests of the organization and the communities we serve.

- Help Policy on anti-fraud & anti-corruption
- Help Procurement Manual

Environmental responsibility, climate protection & sustainability

34. We are committed to minimizing our environmental and carbon footprint and promoting sustainable and climate friendly practices in all our operations and activities.
35. We strive to integrate environmental considerations into our programs, procedures, and initiatives, contributing to the preservation and protection of natural resources.

- Help Strategy

Responsible handling of personal data & information

36. We respect the confidentiality and privacy of individuals and communities we serve, ensuring that sensitive information is handled with care and discretion.
37. We safeguard the confidentiality of personal data in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and maintain adequate technical and organizational measures of protection from unauthorized access.
38. We don't disseminate any confidential information of Help outside of the organization, neither verbally nor in writing unless Help has given prior written consent. Legal regulations mandating the disclosure of information may provide grounds for exceptions to this rule.

- Help Data protection Framework
- Help IT Guidelines

Whistleblowing & Complaints Handling

39. We encourage and support whistleblowers to report any concerns or suspicions of misconduct, including violations of this Code of Conduct, through the designated channels.
40. We guarantee confidentiality and protection against retaliation for individuals who report in good faith.
41. We conduct prompt and impartial investigations into reported complaints and take appropriate corrective action as needed.

- Help Whistleblowing/Complaints Policy

5. Obligations to comply

All governing body members, staff, volunteers, affiliates, representatives, contractors, suppliers, service providers, freelancers, and partners are obliged to declare in adequate written form, that they have received, read, and understood this Code of Conduct and will comply with it. Help commits to uphold procedures and control mechanisms to ensure that this obligation is implemented, and all signatories are adequately informed and trained on their obligations.

6. Reporting requirements & consequences for violations

All persons and entities under the scope of this Code of Conduct are obliged to report any violations of this Code and/or any referenced further policy documents. Reports should be directed to the complaint focal points in each country office, or to the complaint focal point at Help Head Office or to the ombudsperson.

Details can be found in the Whistleblowing/Complaints Policy. Failure to report violations constitutes a breach of this Code of Conduct. Reported violations will be thoroughly investigated. Depending on the severity of the suspected violation, Help reserves the right to suspend the accused/ subject of complaint for the time of the investigation.

Violations of this Policy and deliberately false accusations may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including immediate termination and/or the annulment of contracts and cooperation agreements. Help reserves the right to report criminal offences in compliance with applicable laws.

■ [Help Whistleblowing/Complaints Policy](#)

7. Feedback & revision

Feedback on the policy can be addressed to the Document Owner. Revisions will be conducted within the defined review period.



Bianca Kaltschmitt, Managing Director

8. Annex

Annex 1: CoC Declaration of commitment & compliance

Annex 2: Definitions:

Bullying: Repeated use of threats or violence for purpose of harming or intimidating others.

Child: A person under 18 years of age (according to the UN convention).

Child abuse: Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of a child that results in, or contributes to, actual or potential damage to the health, survival, development, or dignity of that child; this includes child labour and the employment of child soldiers.

Conflict of interest: A conflict between someone's own interests and the legitimate interests of Help.

Corruption: The abuse of power for private gain or for the benefit of an individual. Corruption can be both material and immaterial. This includes offering, awarding, requesting, or receiving financial or material gifts, loans, rewards, supplies or other material or immaterial advantages to or from a third party as an incentive to do something that would be considered dishonest, illegal or a breach of confidence in the context of normal business practises.

Discrimination: Any kind of unjustified, unequal treatment of individuals or groups that result in social disadvantage or degradation.

Fraudulent behaviour: Actions including theft, fraud, forging of documents, embezzlement, and misappropriation that are conducted deliberately or through gross negligence and are harming of the organisation. Fraudulent acts include illegitimately taking possession of assets for personal gain.

Mobbing: Systematic persecution, badgering, and exclusion of individuals or groups by way of verbal or non-verbal attacks with a negative impact on the victim's self-confidence, physical health, or mental health.

Safeguarding: Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments to protect people from exploitation, harm, and abuse of all kinds.

Sexual abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. (Source: the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.)

Sexual harassment: Unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that can include indecent remarks or sexual demands.

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another. (Source: the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.)