



Guiding principle

Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope e.V.

Mission statement

Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope is an interdenominational human rights and aid organisation. The focus of the work is worldwide aid for those in distress.

Sign of Hope stands up for people whose **human rights** are violated or threatened. Sign of Hope provides **humanitarian aid** for people in need in the form of disaster and emergency aid, and is committed to sustainable **development cooperation** according to the principle of “helping people to help themselves”.

In this context, Sign of Hope sees itself as a **bridge of love**, and wishes to establish a connection between giving and receiving, involved people, which is based on a spirit of fellow humanity, charity and solidarity. Sign of Hope provides aid to those in need, supports sustainable development and gives willing people the opportunity to help.

Values and attitudes

Against the backdrop of the Christian faith as a common basis of values and motivation, Sign of Hope is guided by the **fundamental values of humanity, love of neighbour and solidarity**. The Bible verse “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me!” (Mt. 25,40) forms a common basic motif in this context.

For Sign of Hope, every person is a human being created and loved by God. The assistance should enable the receiving person to lead a life in accordance with **human dignity**. Sign of Hope gives the giving person the certainty of helping in a meaningful way. Sign of Hope is aware of its responsibility towards aid recipients, project participants and donors, and treats them with great respect, appreciation and tolerance. Sign of Hope strives for the greatest possible relationship rooted in trust with people who give and people who receive, as well as project participants and partners. Sign of Hope aligns its services at all levels to the needs of its target and stakeholder groups, and ensures their inclusion and participation. Proximity to them and acceptance by them are strengths that Sign of Hope wants to maintain and promote in the future.

The organisation is committed to neutrality and impartiality in its work. Sign of Hope is not affiliated with any political party. Given that, in the spirit of **“working at a grassroots level”**, the individual person is at the centre of the organisation’s efforts, Sign of Hope exercises the greatest possible restraint on political issues.

For the project partners abroad and the contacts at the political, diplomatic and media level, Sign of Hope is a reliable, serious and respected partner.

At the centre of all services by Sign of Hope is the individual person, whose dignity as a human being created by God is central to the activities of Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope. The personal interaction of Sign of Hope staff with individual aid recipients and project participants is characterised by respect, dignity and solidarity. The **theme “Satisfying basic human needs for food, drink and security, especially health”** plays a fundamental role in the areas of operation of Sign of Hope. The regional focus of the Sign of Hope project is the African continent. Central East Africa, especially Ethiopia, northern Kenya and Uganda, is of particular importance in this context. Sign of Hope aims to carry out projects itself where it is necessary and makes sense to do so. In this way, the most effective project design and efficient use of funds is achieved with the help of our own local staff.

Human rights work

In the field of human rights work, Sign of Hope stands by people worldwide whose human rights are violated or threatened. Special attention is given to the human right to enjoy freedom of religion. In the **information search**, information relevant to human rights is obtained and compiled. Particular importance is attached to the information that Sign of Hope obtains first-hand on the ground during human rights fact-finding trips. During **information processing**, researched information is prepared in a suitable form, for example, in reports or essays for the Sign of Hope magazine. In the area of **influencing**, Sign of Hope undertakes activities to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation in a particular country and/or to assist victims of human rights violations. Here, Sign of Hope goes public with protest and prayer campaigns or uses diplomatic contacts in the background of political events for the benefit of people in distress. In addition, Sign of Hope carries out **human rights projects** in selected countries.

International aid and cooperation

In the area of **humanitarian aid**, which consists of disaster relief and emergency aid, Sign of Hope supports people in need worldwide. Humanitarian aid is primarily understood as survival aid. We include forces for “self-help” in our work, and also aim to promote disaster vulnerability reduction. In short-term **disaster relief**, Sign of Hope quickly ensures the survival of people who are in need worldwide due to sudden natural disasters while minimizing any bureaucracy involved. Here, Sign of Hope works primarily with local project partners. In short- and medium-term **emergency aid**, Sign of Hope responds to situations in defined priority countries where the timely delivery of relief supplies is important for people’s survival. This aid is often targeted at populations affected by prolonged crises, especially conflict or war, but also by devastating environmental pollution. In the event of a radical improvement in an emergency situation, emergency aid projects can be followed by long-term development cooperation projects. Our work is guided by the “Basic rules of humanitarian aid” as formulated by the Federal Government’s Humanitarian Aid Coordination Committee and in the “Sphere Standards” of the International Red Cross and other international aid organizations.

Development cooperation is performed by Sign of Hope in equally defined countries. It is based on the principles of sustainability and intends to bring about long-term, structural improvements in the areas of food security, education, health and income generation. The projects of Sign of Hope in the field of development cooperation are also aimed at contributing to the achievement of the United Nations World Development Goals, and thus to the reduction of poverty worldwide.

By working with local partners and staff on the ground, Sign of Hope strives to ensure that project goals are defined and achieved together with the target population. In this way, we

support **the personal responsibility and participation** of the participants. In line with the principles of sustainability, we make sure that the activities have a long-term impact. With the approach of helping people to help themselves, Sign of Hope pursues the goal of strengthening the skills and knowledge of the target group and empowering people to independently bring about this **sustainable change in their living conditions**. In the projects, just like our project partners on the ground, we try to involve local authorities and hand over the activities that have been started to state or civil society structures for their subsequent continuation. Sign of Hope conducts a dialogue with the project participants as partners at eye level, in a manner characterised by respectful interaction.

Meaningful assistance

Those who support Sign of Hope help in a meaningful way.

Sign of Hope reports publicly on the plight of people, and provides information on the humanitarian and human rights situation in many countries. By **donating, praying or participating in protest campaigns**, Sign of Hope gives everyone interested the opportunity to stand up as a human being who is prepared to lend their help and give in the fight against misery, need and human rights violations. These activities are **signs of hope and charity**. In personal exchanges, Sign of Hope staff communicate this to the people receiving help and to the project participants. The thanks that Sign of Hope staff receive in the project countries are passed on to the people who help and to the donors. In this way, signs of hope create contacts between people. Sign of Hope uses the entrusted funds appropriately and sparingly in a way that those giving and receiving appreciate. **Maintaining the trust of our donors is our obligation**. We use the funds entrusted to us professionally, economically, effectively and responsibly.

Through cooperation with local partners and the work of local Sign of Hope staff on the ground, we aim to take local and cultural conditions into account when planning and implementing projects. Furthermore, we support the target groups in the implementation of the activities planned with them, thereby strengthening the skills and ownership of the people we work with. The approach of helping people to help themselves, therefore, plays a key role in our projects.

The donation activity is documented to the donor so that the tax authorities recognise the donation as serving charitable or benevolent purposes.

Employees

Sign of Hope is concerned about good working conditions both for staff members who are employed by Sign of Hope, and for those who work for Sign of Hope on a voluntary basis. Sign of Hope promotes a good working atmosphere based on mutual appreciation, tolerance and respect, and pays close attention to human interaction, regardless of hierarchy and responsibility levels. Sign of Hope supports its employees to expand and deepen existing knowledge, in order to continuously optimise the organisation's performance.

Financial resources

Sign of Hope is a non-profit organisation that does not seek to make a profit, but uses its financial resources to achieve its goals. Sign of Hope finances its operational activities through donations and grants from institutional donors.

In order to preserve the independence of Sign of Hope, public donations should not exceed a share of 20 per cent of the total monetary income. Sign of Hope follows the “Charter of Donors’ Rights” and the “19 Fundamental Rules for Good, Ethical Fundraising Practice” of the German Fundraising Association, as well as the principles of the German Charities Council, in order to deal with its donors in a transparent, lawful and respectful manner.

All accounting practices are oriented towards the contemporary standards of non-profit organisations, and are characterised by the greatest possible level of transparency. In order to secure its long-term existence, Sign of Hope builds up financial reserves in an appropriate ratio to the association’s donation income, as agreed with the responsible financial authorities. Sign of Hope is a member of the German Charities Council, and undertakes – in a voluntary declaration – to comply with the principles of the German Charities Council. Compliance with these principles and Sign of Hope’s annual financial statements are audited annually by an independent auditor.

Organisation and leadership

The members of the association determine the policy of the association and are responsible for updating the statutes. The honorary Supervisory Board is responsible for the strategic management and supervision of operational activities of the Executive Board. The full-time Executive Board represents the operational management body of Sign of Hope. It uses the resources at its disposal effectively and efficiently. Professional competence, temporal availability and Christian motivation are important prerequisites for the staffing of the association's bodies. The executive management of Sign of Hope is guided by the contemporary principles of management for non-profit organisations.

The Mission Statement was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 March 2009 and revised on 15 March 2013 and 10 March 2017.