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Preamble

The constitution of Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope e.V. builds the foundation of Sign of Hope's work. It constitutes the main strategic paper, stipulates the guiding principles of Sign of Hope and serves as framework to the policies and operational guidelines. Individual agreements on objectives and goals set jointly by staff members and line managers build on these operational guidelines. The linkage between Sign of Hope's constitution and the individual goals and targets of each staff member is defined by this hierarchy of management tools.

One of Sign of Hope's operational concept papers is the "Concept Paper on Management and Organizational Structures". The Safety & Security Policy at hand adds to this operational concept paper. It shows Sign of Hope's commitment to maximize the safety and security of all staff members and is a fundamental part of the management tools of Sign of Hope.

The Safety & Security Policy in its existing version stipulates the principles that Sign of Hope strives to live up to. The current policy will be reviewed and if necessary adapted following an initial trial period of 12 months.

Operationally, safety and security exist when staff members are enabled to pursue their tasks without undue risk to health or life. Organisational security is achieved when SoH assets are safe and when SoH's name and reputation are maintained with a high degree of integrity.

1. Mission and Vision Statement

Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope e.V works to protect the rights of people in distress and to meet their needs for assistance. Our work is informed by spiritual beliefs, yet not affiliated with any denomination.


Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope e.V. recognises that development and humanitarian relief work is often performed in extremely unstable and potentially dangerous environments and has therefore introduced this Safety and Security Policy with a view to maintaining the safest possible working conditions.

Sign of Hope subscribes to the Core Humanitarian Standard and believes that staff safety and security comprises the most important resource for Sign of Hope and the communities we serve. Effective safety and security policies and procedures are designed to ensure that the work of Sign of Hope can be carried out even in challenging environments.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all who are working for, or operating on behalf of, Sign of Hope including board and staff members, consultants, local staff, interns, volunteers and other individuals representing the organisation while on duty in Germany or in any country where the organization has established branch offices or permanent representations, in a project country or on duty travel.

	Compiled by	Reviewed & Approved
Name	M. Kipping / F. Stahl	R. Reubelt / K. Stieglitz
Date	27.07.2018	10.08.2018
Signature		

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3. Policy Statement

Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope e.V. is committed to the safety and security of all staff members and partners involved in projects undertaken by SoH. The Executive Board of SoH bears the duty of care for all staff members and establishes clear standards and guidelines to ensure that staff are given adequate training, support, and information to mitigate risks while maximizing the impact of our projects and programmes for people in need.¹ SoH seeks to provide safe and healthy working conditions for all staff, mindful of each individual staff member's responsibility to achieve this.

Decisions to carry out projects in extreme risk environments² will be taken on a case to case basis by the board, based on a thorough risk assessment of the prevailing security situation and possible mitigation measures and taking into consideration SoH's priorities and capabilities. Unnecessary risks are to be avoided and it is SoH's ambition to ensure maximum security for all staff members.

4. Authority and Responsibility for Safety & Security

4.1 Leadership Responsibility

Safety and security is always a top level management task. As part of its Duty of Care, effective safety and security management is the responsibility of the Executive Board of Sign of Hope. Line management is responsible to ensure organisational duty of care towards all staff members and that the SoH Safety and Security Policy, standards, plans and procedures are well integrated at all stages of planning, designing, developing and implementing SoH projects & programmes.

4.2 Individual Responsibility

Safety and security is everyone's job: staff will actively participate in and contribute to the maintenance of safety and security measures, awareness of security risks and team security, coordination with other humanitarian actors.

SoH staff will always strive to understand the local culture and behave in a manner that is respectful of its cultural norms, while remaining vigilant to any changes in the operational environment that might increase their or the organisation's exposure to threats.

All SoH staff are responsible for the impact their actions might have on the safety and security of their fellow staff, and for SoH Projects & Programs, reputation and assets under their management and care; and will, when and where possible, reasonably support the safety and security of implementing partners and beneficiaries.


All SoH staff are responsible for their own safety and security and should exercise common sense to ensure their own safety. Failure to comply with the policy, procedures and standards may increase the risk of harm to staff, SoH assets; and may reduce acceptance of SoH by host governments, communities and beneficiaries.

All SoH staff must comply with this SoH Safety and Security Policy and Standards. Misconduct, including failure to report breaches of this policy, standards and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and/or cancellation of the contract.

Irrespective of SoH's judgement of risks in a particular situation, any staff member has the right to decline a deployment, activity or travel (right to opt out) without suffering disciplinary action if they feel the risk

¹ Duty of care is the legal and moral obligation of an organisation to take all possible measures to reduce the risk of harm to those working for, or operating on behalf of, an organisation. This includes staff, volunteers, interns, contractors (such as guards or drivers) and implementing partner organisations (although the level of duty of care required may be different).

² See Risk Assessment Guide

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to their personal security or to that of their immediate family is unacceptable, except for when instructions are given for the purpose of avoiding a dangerous situation and reducing risk.

5. Safety & Security Management

5.1 Safety & Situation analysis and risk assessment

For ongoing operations, the safety and security situation, trends, risks and threat levels will be continuously monitored and documented as these can greatly affect the strategic planning process. Changes to the security situation will be reacted to in a timely manner.


A Safety and Security focal point (SSFP) will be appointed at headquarter and country base as well as in the field offices in order to raise awareness, monitor developments and advise the board on safety and security risks, the development of mitigation strategies, integration of safety and security in program design and planning process and enable programs by supporting program operations.

Integral part of all relevant activities undertaken by SoH will be an assessment of the threat environment, vulnerability and risk assessment of SoH Projects & Programs, reputation, staff and assets; specific risk mitigation measures and plans; safety and security policies and procedures; and roles and responsibilities of staff assigned under these policies and procedures.

5.2 Security approach

In establishing appropriate risk management strategies, three basic security approaches are usually considered – acceptance, protection and deterrence. To ensure the safety and security of all staff members, SoH builds on the acceptance approach whenever possible.

- The acceptance approach draws upon professional relationships with community members, authorities and all other stakeholders to provide consent for the presence and activities of a non-governmental organisation (NGO). Acceptance for SoH's engagement can help reduce security threats and facilitate early warning.
- Acceptance is a cornerstone of effective security management in both development and emergency humanitarian relief contexts and is consistent with our relationship-driven approach. SoH's overall approach, program design and behaviour of staff will be based on the acceptance approach and the principles of transparency, accountability, respect and participation.
- SoH recognizes that staff safety and security is, to a great extent, best assured when SoH and staff are well integrated into the local community and valued for their contributions to local development and humanitarian relief. Therefore, SoH will always strive to be accepted by local authorities, partners, communities and other stakeholders for its presence and the work the organization performs.
- Field Offices will ensure that design, planning, operations and implementation of SoH projects & programs incorporate acceptance as our core approach. All relevant major stakeholders who can potentially affect and influence SoH projects & programs and their implementation will be consulted regularly and appropriate rapport/ relationship will be maintained.
- The acceptance approach is not a panacea for addressing all security threats, but it provides a foundation for effective security management in emergency humanitarian relief contexts. As such, contingent on the situation on the ground, nature of our program and risk assessment, the acceptance approach may have to be complemented with protection (through control and physical protection measures) and, at times, deterrence approaches.
- Protection: Reducing the risk, but not the threat by reducing the vulnerability of the organization, typically by increasing physical protection of persons, buildings, compounds, and/or distribution sites.
- Deterrence: Reducing the risk by containing the threat with a counter threat, such as diplomatic and political leverage, temporary suspension and as a last option armed protection.

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5.3 Reporting

All relevant security incidents (e.g. theft, carjacking, robbery, ambush, etc.) must be reported immediately to line management, which is required to report serious incidents to the board. Incident analysis must be undertaken, after the immediate event has been dealt with, to determine why the incident happened and how it could be prevented or managed more effectively in the future.

Reporting on security incidents and safety concerns is a core element of project reports and standard reports such as field office reports to headquarters and line managers' monthly report to the board.

5.4 Budget

Adequate budgeting for safety and security management will be included at all tiers of SoH's work in order to attain compliance with the safety and security policy, standards, procedures and guidelines. Whenever the risk assessment justifies the expense, direct costs for safety and security are incorporated into the programme implementation budget. This includes necessary security-related costs, such as equipment (e.g. radios, satellite phones, first aid kits, emergency equipment/supplies, emergency cash, facility improvements, insurance or similar), or time (e.g. implementing a proactive acceptance strategy, negotiating for sustainable access).

5.5 Training

All SoH staff will have access and orientate themselves to the Safety and Security Policy, standards, procedures and supporting tools and guidelines. These will be included in the initial orientation and briefings for all staff and a signed acknowledgement will be kept.

Training, learning opportunities, resources and support will be provided by SoH to all staff so that they can fulfil their assigned responsibilities and work effectively and safely in their respective areas of operation.

For reasons of efficiency SoH has decided to align itself with the Save the Children handbook "Security First" which gives detailed guidance. All staff members who are travelling abroad to non-EU countries or working on field locations should familiarize themselves with the provisions of the handbook. Completion of an online training to this effect is mandatory for all SoH staff members of the Disaster Response Team (DRT) and staff travelling to extreme risk environments.

5.6 Performance Management

Performance objectives and reviews should include management of safety & security. This can be at the individual level, i.e. displaying awareness of personal security issues and the impact of own actions on the security of oneself, others and SoH.


5.7 Insurance Cover

All SoH staff benefit from individual duty travel insurance, covering emergency situations worldwide whilst travelling for SoH. The subscription is managed by SoH. Field offices will seek local insurance options for local staff where possible. In all SoH field offices, the field manager must formulate a Staff Health Protocol, which includes a procedure for medical emergencies.

5.8 Involvement of Arms

SoH staff must not carry or take up arms under any circumstance and must not use or hire armed personnel either directly or indirectly. Dual-use goods (pangas/machetes, axes, hammers, knives, etc.) are considered to be tools and not arms as long as the carrier does not create the appearance of carrying or using the dual-use good as a weapon. Arms and armed personnel must not be allowed in SoH premises or vehicles, except if staff are threatened or coerced. Permission to use or hire armed personnel (either directly or indirectly) may only be granted by the board on a case by case basis.

SoH will use armed escorts as a last resort, or when required by local authorities and in support of life-saving activities after gaining approval of the Board of SoH.

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5.9 Travel Security

Prior to submitting a travel request it is mandatory to consult the official travel and security advice by the Australian ministry of foreign affairs (www.smarttraveller.gov.au) for the destination country. In case the official travel advice is "DO NOT TRAVEL" for the concerned country or region the staff member is obliged to and in justified cases the staff member is entitled to carry out a risk assessment and propose mitigation strategies using the SoH travel security assessment template. Guidance to carry out the assessment can be sought from the SoH risk assessment guide. The assessment should include standard operational procedures (SOPs) and a contingency plan. The completed assessment is to be presented to line management and to the board. The ultimate authorisation to travel after having carried out a comprehensive risk assessment is granted by the board.

5.10 Field office Safety & Security

A Safety & Security Management Plan (SSMP) must be developed for each field location in which Hoffnungszeichen | Sign of Hope e.V. has a presence. A context and risk analysis, including an assessment of threats and vulnerabilities, must form a part of the SSMP. The SoH risk assessment guide can facilitate this process: It provides guidelines for context analysis, actor mapping and risk assessments.

The SSMP must be approved by the field office manager and signed off by the board. Each SSMP should be regularly reviewed and updated at least once a year. In insecure contexts, a more frequent review schedule should be agreed upon. Advice from technical experts and the focal point for safety and security can be sought to support the development of such plans and in any other issues relating to security management.

Each SSMP must include the following key elements:


- Line of authority
- Risk Assessment Process
- Security Strategy (Acceptance, Protection and Deterrence)
- Crisis Management Strategy
- Personal Safety and Security
- Residential arrangements
- Situational awareness
- Specific security concerns for women
- Contingency Plan & Standard Operating Procedures

All affected staff must be made aware of the contents, practical application and authority of the SSMP.

5.10.1 Contingency Plan & Standard Operational Procedures

In order to ensure maximum security of SoH staff and assets, SOPs will have to be developed at field office level as well as a contingency plan. As a minimum the following topics must be included:

- Handling cash
- Communications
- Transportation
- Organisational assets
- Incident reporting (e.g. theft, carjacking, robbery, ambush, etc.)
- Evacuation plans
- Media relations
- Stress and trauma prevention
- Assembly points

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5.10.2. Evacuation, Relocation and Hibernation

Planning and preparation for evacuation is a key part of any safety and security management plan at field office level. Preparation should also be made for 'hibernation' – when it is safer to stay in a location rather than to attempt to move. In a relocation SoH's aim is to return staff to the next safe place within the country. However, if evacuation is needed beyond borders, SoH will not evacuate national staff or their families. SoH will endeavour to relocate national staff and their immediate family who were posted elsewhere in the country by SoH to a safer place within the country. SoH will strive to assist in the relocation of any national staff and their immediate family (spouse and own children) who are at risk directly as a consequence of their work with SoH, or because of their ethnic origin, or if they are exposed to an imminent or targeted threat. However, SoH cannot guarantee this assistance.

Since SoH is obliged to duty of care of all staff members, the refusal of any staff member to evacuate or relocate may result in that staff member's dismissal. Regardless of the reason, any SoH staff member and their dependents refusing an evacuation/relocation order must acknowledge in writing that s/he is remaining at her/his risk and that SoH will not accept responsibility for her/his safety.

5.11. Withdrawal

Authorisation to withdraw from an area, to suspend or to temporarily close an office for security reasons, can be given by the head of the field office or the line management with immediate effect and is binding for all staff.

5.12. Authorisation to return

Authorisation to return to an area after evacuation, relocation or suspension can only be given by the board. A systematic security review must be undertaken by the relevant manager and a written report, including recommendations, submitted by the field office manager for decision-making. The systematic security review should re-consider and revise the existing context and risk analysis and the appropriateness of security strategies and security management plans. Particular emphasis should be placed on how the situation may have changed and what measures should be taken to reflect these changes.

5.13. Abduction/kidnapping


In the case of abduction or kidnapping of a staff member of SoH,

- SoH will use all appropriate means to secure the release of staff that has been abducted.
- However, SoH cannot give in to the demands of abductors including the payment of ransom for the release of staff.
- SoH will not reveal the exact strategies that will be employed during a negotiation process and will try to do its best that other affected stakeholders like government authorities, or hostage negotiators do the same.
- SoH will keep family members apprised of the situation and offer support to families throughout and after the ordeal.
- SoH will ensure that post-abduction procedures will include an organizational debriefing, access to professional crisis counselling and other support deemed necessary to support recovery.

6. Promoting Health, Safety and Security

Appropriate action is taken to ensure health and safety regulations and fire prevention regulations are compatible with local procedures and that all concerned are aware of and adhere to the regulations and procedures. SoH will promote health, safety and security by

- Implementing emergency procedures such as for evacuation in case of fire or other significant incidents;

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- Ensuring that all places of work are as far as possible safe and without risk to health (e.g. ensuring safe storage/use of substances and provide Personal Protective Equipment when necessary).
- Conducting risk assessments to ensure that systems of work and procedures are safe and without risk to health and are implemented and supervised.
- Providing for the instruction and training of employees in matters relating to health and safety.
- Consulting employees on the effective promotion and development of health and safety measures.