

POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Binding for: ■ Boards of Directors, Executive Management, and all employees of Welthungerhilfe (Association and Foundation)

To be agreed with: ■ All partner organisations
■ All social businesses
■ All freelancers working for Welthungerhilfe
■ All persons and groups volunteering for Welthungerhilfe
■ All suppliers and service providers of Welthungerhilfe

The current applicable version of this document is available on the internet at (www.welthungerhilfe.de/code-of-conduct).

1. Introduction

Sexual violence takes many forms and can affect anyone, although it is more common in situations where one person has power over another. Welthungerhilfe¹ is aware that development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects and programmes create an inherent power imbalance between Project Participants² and Welthungerhilfe's Employees or Contributors who provide aid supplies and services. This imbalance means there is a risk that some Employees and Contributors may abuse their position of power for personal gain, including for sexual favours.

Sexual violence by Employees or Contributors directly contravenes Welthungerhilfe's principles, harming the people whom it is committed to protecting. Welthungerhilfe applies a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual violence by Employees and Contributors regardless of whom it is directed against and follows the six IASC-Principles in all its projects and programs:

“1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.

2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.

3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.

6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.”

2. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to do the following:

- protect all Project Participants, Employees, and Contributors from sexual violence perpetrated by Employees and Contributors;

¹ **Welthungerhilfe:** this term refers to both the association Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. and the foundation Deutsche Welthungerhilfe.

² **Project Participants:** target groups (Beneficiaries) of programmes and projects implemented by Welthungerhilfe or its Partner Organisations; members of communities in which Welthungerhilfe and its Partner Organisations are active; anyone who is actively participating in programmes or projects of Welthungerhilfe or its Partner Organisations and who is not categorised as either an Employee or a Contributor.

- establish rules of conduct for the prevention of sexual violence and thereby promote such preventative actions;
- raise awareness of risks in order to help identify misconduct;
- protect Employees and Contributors from false or malicious accusations;
- inform third parties and Project Participants about the conduct they can expect from Employees and Contributors of Welthungerhilfe; and
- express existing contractual obligations in clear terms.

3. Scope

The provisions of this Policy apply to the following:

- a) Welthungerhilfe (Association and Foundation) employees, regardless of their type of contract (including full-time employees, temporary personnel, interns and personnel on loan), the scope of their responsibilities and the location of employment;
- b) Employees, executives, and committee members of Partner Organisations³ receiving material or non-material support from Welthungerhilfe;
- c) Employees, executives and committee members of social businesses that Welthungerhilfe holds shares in;
- d) Freelancers working for Welthungerhilfe on a contractual basis;
- e) People and groups volunteering for Welthungerhilfe (e.g. members of the Programme Advisory Committee or action groups); and
- f) Suppliers and service providers for Welthungerhilfe.

Members of the Association's bodies (the General Assembly, Supervisory Board, and Executive Board) of Welthungerhilfe as well the Foundation's Executive Board and management commit themselves to respecting this Policy. Hereinafter, the persons specified in points b) through f) above are referred to as Contributors.

This Policy applies worldwide, serving as the minimum standard for each and every Employee and Contributor. It complements Welthungerhilfe's Code of Conduct as well as the policies, international standards, and codices mentioned therein. Employees and Contributors must also observe the laws that prevail at their place of deployment. In the event of discrepancies, the stricter standard will prevail.

Welthungerhilfe will not be liable for the actions of Contributors who violate this Policy despite having previously given their agreement to the Policy in writing.

4. Definition

Sexual violence takes many forms, including the following:

- **Sexual abuse:** any actual or threatened physical act of a sexual nature whether effected through violence, under unequal circumstances or through compulsion.
- **Sexual exploitation:** any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, unequal power relationships, or trust in order to use someone sexually in order to gain financial, social or political benefits.
- **Sexual harassment:** any behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and that makes someone feel uncomfortable and offends their dignity. This includes suggestive remarks, unwelcome physical contact or proximity, displaying or sharing of suggestive

³ **Partner Organisations:** all local, national, and international partners who have signed a memorandum of understanding or a partnership agreement with Welthungerhilfe, including community-based organisations, civil society groups, non-governmental organisations and advocacy partners.

material (e.g. via email or social media), and sexist conversations or jokes, whether in verbal, written or non-verbal form.

5. Rules of Conduct

All Employees and Contributors are explicitly prohibited from participating in activities that could result in sexual violence. Welthungerhilfe therefore commits to the following:

- selecting its Employees and Contributors with great care;
- sensitising its Employees and Contributors through appropriate means, e.g. training;
- offering various channels for Employees, Contributors, Project Participants, and third parties to report any suspicions;
- taking measures to protect survivors⁴;
- following up on any reported suspicions of sexual violence promptly, proportionately, and using trained investigators; and
- protecting victims of sexual violence by Employees and Contributors of Welthungerhilfe and offering them support. Such support may include expert psychosocial counselling and/or access to other professionals. The type and degree of support will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Executive Board.

5.1 No Abuse of Power

Employees and Contributors must never abuse a disbalance of power. A disbalance of power may result from a scarcity of resources, a difference in position, or other disadvantages or disabilities that deprive individuals the ability to express or exercise their dignity and free will. Such disbalances put Employees and Contributors in a position of power over the people who receive support from Welthungerhilfe's projects and programmes or may depend on help from Welthungerhilfe for survival.

In particular, Employees and Contributors are strictly prohibited from humiliating or exploiting anyone. This includes soliciting or receiving sex or sexual favours in exchange for money, employment, aid supplies, goods or services. The same applies to sexual coercion or obtaining sexual favours through threats or violence.

Such behaviour toward children⁵ is also prohibited. More information can be found in the following document:

- [Child Protection Policy](#)

5.2 Creating a Low-Risk Environment

Employees and Contributors of Welthungerhilfe shall counteract sexual violence by creating and maintaining an environment that counteracts sexual violence. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- educating Employees about the content of this Policy and obtaining confirmation from Contributors that they abide by the principles of this Policy in their work;
- educating Project Participants about their rights, about channels available to them to report violations of this Policy, and about the contents of this Policy;
- balancing the gender composition (male + female) of teams at Welthungerhilfe or its Partner Organisations at all levels of function and responsibility; and

⁴ **Survivor:** someone who has experienced sexual violence.

⁵ **Child:** a person under 18 years of age (according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

- carefully reviewing potential new Partner Organisations, including the measures they take against sexual violence, before an agreement for cooperation is reached or a contract is signed.

5.3 Distributing Aid Supplies

Employees and Contributors shall ensure that the distribution of aid supplies and services to Beneficiaries⁶ is always free of demands. Project Participants must therefore be clearly and adequately informed of the criteria used to select Beneficiaries, the type and amount of aid supplies and services, and distribution details (the time, place, method, etc.). Situations in which individual Employees or Contributors appear to have complete authority over the distribution of aid supplies and services are to be avoided.

5.4 No Sexual Relationships with Project Participants

Sexual relationships between Employees or Contributors and Project Participants can be perceived by third parties and the public as an abuse of power or a Conflict of Interest⁷ due to the power imbalances inherent in such relationships. This is the case even if the people involved in such a relationship see it as consensual and non-exploitative.

Entering into sexual relationships with Project Participants undermines the credibility and integrity of Welthungerhilfe's work. As a consequence, Welthungerhilfe Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in sexual relationships with Project Participants, including Children (defined by the UNCRC as persons under 18 years of age). Welthungerhilfe expects Contributors to also abide by this rule.

More information can be found in the following document:

- [Policy against Conflicts of Interest](#)

5.5 No Commercial Sexual Services

Welthungerhilfe condemns any exchange of money, goods, services or favours for sexual services. Employees and Contributors are urged not to avail themselves of commercial sexual services also in purely private contexts and in countries where prostitution or the receipt of sexual services are not illegal.

6. Reporting Requirements and Consequences for Violations

Anyone with concerns, suspicions or knowledge of incidents regarding violations of this Policy is obligated to immediately report them to the Compliance department at Welthungerhilfe's Head Office via Welthungerhilfe's Reporting Portal (www.welthungerhilfe.org/complaints);



The Reporting Portal ensures adequate confidentiality and allows for anonymous reporting. Alternatively, reporters can use Welthungerhilfe's Reporting E-Mail (complaints@welthungerhilfe.de).

⁶ **Beneficiaries:** the target groups for programmes and projects implemented by Welthungerhilfe or one of its partner organisations.

⁷ **Conflict of interest:** a conflict between someone's private interests and official or professional responsibilities.

Any report submitted to management or via national complaint lines to Welthungerhilfe must be passed on by them to the Compliance department via Welthungerhilfe's Reporting Portal.

Nobody who reports suspected violations or submits information regarding such violations with honest intent, needs to fear any disadvantage or other consequences, even if the report later turns out to be unfounded. It is not the responsibility of Employees, Contributors or reporters to conduct investigations, search for evidence, or determine whether a violation of this Policy took place.

Deliberately false accusations will not be tolerated. The failure to report a suspected violation of this Policy constitutes a violation of Welthungerhilfe's Code of Conduct and of this Policy.

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

Additional information is provided in the following documents:

- [Guideline for Reporting Code of Conduct Violations](#)
- [For Germany: Shop Agreement Whistleblowing System](#)

Reporting Portal: www.welthungerhilfe.org/complaints
Reporting E-Mail: complaints@welthungerhilfe.de




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