



ETHICS CHARTER

Hand in Hand Switzerland

Preamble

Hand in Hand Switzerland is committed to promoting sustainable, inclusive and human-centred development in close partnership with Hand in Hand India and its group of institutions.

In pursuing the objectives set out in Article 3 of its Statutes, Hand in Hand Switzerland recognizes that development cooperation carries a particular responsibility towards the individuals and communities it seeks to support, towards its donors and partners, and towards society as a whole.

Our work shall therefore be guided not only by applicable law and our statutory objectives, but also by the principles of **human dignity, integrity, equality, accountability, transparency, sustainability and mutual respect**.

This Ethics Charter defines the fundamental principles governing the activities and decisions of Hand in Hand Switzerland and the conduct of those acting on its behalf.

1. Human Dignity and Respect

We respect the inherent dignity, autonomy and worth of every human being.

All persons and communities involved in or affected by our activities shall be treated with respect, fairness and sensitivity, irrespective of nationality, origin, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion, belief, social or economic status or any other personal characteristic.

Our activities shall seek to empower people and communities and shall avoid dependency, paternalism, exploitation or the portrayal of individuals as passive recipients of aid.

2. Equality, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

Hand in Hand Switzerland promotes equal opportunities, inclusion and social participation.

We reject all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, abuse and violence.

Particular attention shall be given to persons and communities who are vulnerable, marginalised or exposed to social or economic disadvantage.

3. Protection and Empowerment of Children

The elimination of child labour and the protection and development of children are fundamental objectives of Hand in Hand.

The best interests, dignity, safety and rights of children shall be a primary consideration in all activities involving or affecting them.

We do not tolerate child labour, child exploitation, abuse, trafficking or any other conduct that compromises the physical, psychological or social well-being of children.

Children shall be portrayed and represented in communications and fundraising activities with dignity and with appropriate respect for their privacy.



4. Empowerment and Local Ownership

We believe that sustainable development is achieved through empowerment rather than dependency.

Programs supported by Hand in Hand Switzerland shall seek to strengthen the ability of individuals and communities to shape their own economic, social and environmental future.

We recognize and respect the knowledge, experience, culture and decision-making capacity of local communities and our partners in India.

Our relationship with Hand in Hand India is based on **partnership, mutual respect, dialogue and shared responsibility**, rather than on a donor-recipient hierarchy.

5. Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment

We recognize the central role of women in sustainable social and economic development.

We support initiatives that strengthen women's economic independence, participation and decision-making capacity, including through self-help groups, entrepreneurship, access to financial resources and employment opportunities.

Financial inclusion and microfinance initiatives shall be designed and implemented responsibly and shall seek to improve the long-term well-being and autonomy of their beneficiaries.

6. Integrity and Prevention of Corruption

Hand in Hand Switzerland conducts its activities with honesty, integrity and independence.

We have zero tolerance for corruption, bribery, fraud, embezzlement, misuse of funds or other forms of improper conduct.

No person acting for or on behalf of Hand in Hand Switzerland may offer, promise, give, request or accept an improper advantage in connection with the Association's activities.

Actual or potential conflicts of interest shall be disclosed promptly and managed transparently.

7. Responsible Use of Funds

Funds entrusted to Hand in Hand Switzerland shall be used responsibly, efficiently and in accordance with the purposes for which they were provided.

We are committed to appropriate financial controls, accurate records and transparent reporting.

Donors shall receive truthful and proportionate information concerning the use and impact of their contributions.

Administrative and operational decisions shall be guided by the objective of maximising sustainable social impact while maintaining appropriate standards of governance and accountability.

8. Ethical Fundraising and Communication

Our fundraising and public communications shall be truthful, respectful and transparent.

We shall not exaggerate needs, results or impact in order to obtain financial support.

Images, personal stories and information concerning beneficiaries shall be used responsibly and with respect for their dignity and privacy.

We shall avoid communications that reinforce stereotypes, sensationalise poverty or suffering, or portray individuals and communities merely as objects of charity.



Our communications should reflect the resilience, capabilities and agency of the people and communities with whom Hand in Hand works.

9. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Hand in Hand Switzerland respects the privacy of beneficiaries, donors, employees, volunteers, partners and all other individuals whose personal data it processes.

Personal data shall be collected and used lawfully, fairly, transparently and only to the extent necessary for legitimate purposes.

Particular care shall be exercised when processing information relating to children or other vulnerable individuals.

Confidential information obtained through our activities shall be protected against unauthorised disclosure or misuse.

10. Environmental Responsibility

Environmental sustainability is an integral part of the Hand in Hand development model.

We support responsible management of natural resources, waste reduction, recycling, environmental awareness and initiatives designed to improve the long-term resilience of communities and ecosystems.

We shall seek to minimize the environmental impact of our own activities and consider environmental consequences in our decision-making.

11. Responsible Partnerships

We seek to collaborate with organizations, institutions, donors, companies and individuals who share or respect our fundamental values.

Before entering into significant partnerships, Hand in Hand Switzerland shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the proposed relationship is consistent with this Charter and does not expose the Association or the communities it supports to inappropriate ethical, legal or reputational risks.

We shall not knowingly support or associate ourselves with activities that involve serious violations of human rights, corruption, exploitation or other conduct fundamentally incompatible with our values.

12. Independence and Impartiality

Hand in Hand Switzerland acts independently in pursuit of its statutory objectives.

Our humanitarian and development activities shall not be used to advance party-political, ideological, religious or private commercial interests.

Cooperation with governments, public institutions, companies and other organisations shall not compromise our independence, integrity or commitment to the communities we serve.

13. Accountability and Transparency

We accept responsibility for our decisions, activities and use of resources.

We shall provide appropriate information concerning our governance, activities, finances and impact and shall maintain mechanisms that allow concerns regarding our activities to be raised and considered fairly.

Mistakes or shortcomings shall be addressed openly and used as opportunities for learning and improvement.



14. Responsible Conduct

General Assembly, Executive Committee members, employees, volunteers, consultants and other persons acting on behalf of Hand in Hand Switzerland are expected to conduct themselves consistently with this Charter.

They shall:

- act honestly, respectfully and professionally;
- protect the reputation and interests of Hand in Hand Switzerland;
- avoid and disclose conflicts of interest;
- safeguard confidential and personal information;
- use the Association's resources only for legitimate purposes;
- treat beneficiaries, colleagues, partners and donors with dignity and respect; and
- report serious concerns or suspected violations of this Charter through the appropriate channels.

No person shall suffer retaliation for raising a genuine ethical concern in good faith.

15. Implementation

The Executive Committee of Hand in Hand Switzerland is responsible for promoting and overseeing compliance with this Ethics Charter.

The principles of this Charter shall, where appropriate, be reflected in the Association's internal policies, contractual relationships, partnership arrangements, fundraising activities and project decisions.

Material concerns or potential violations shall be brought to the attention of the Board or another person designated by the Board for this purpose.

The Executive Committee shall periodically review this Charter in light of the Association's activities, experience and evolving standards of responsible development cooperation.

Hand in Hand Switzerland believes that **how development is achieved matters as much as what is achieved**. We therefore commit ourselves to pursuing the objectives of Hand in Hand with integrity, humility and respect; to listening to the communities and partners with whom we work; and to ensuring that our activities contribute to sustainable opportunities that enable people to shape their own future.

Empowerment. Dignity. Partnership. Responsibility.

Adopted by the Executive Committee of Hand in Hand Switzerland on Friday, 21 August 2026