

CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

Working in the humanitarian field brings multiple challenges. To ensure our positive impact and avoid tensions, misunderstandings, or the misuse of power, we all must agree and adhere to certain rules.

The Code of Conduct contains the **fundamental humanitarian principles** and forms the basis of our work. It aims to protect everyone involved in the projects of selfm.aid from any form of harm, ensure an atmosphere of inclusiveness and fairness and create an environment of respect and teamwork, where everybody can feel safe and unfold his or her potential.

Do not Harm – consider the potential consequences

- The principle of “do no harm” obliges everybody involved in humanitarian work to **prevent and mitigate any negative impact** of their actions on affected populations.
- We are all asked to adopt the ‘do no harm approach’ in both **professional and social environments**, and to **consistently assess the implications and potential consequences** of our actions for ourselves as individuals, for people on the move and for their respective organizations.
- We must be conscious of the social, cultural and professional contexts we are working in, particularly the interactions with people on the move, and **work within the necessary professional boundaries** that ensure we can provide principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid.

Accountability

Everyone at selfm.aid is responsible and accountable - individually and collectively - for their behavior and professional standards. Breaches of the Code of Conduct can vary in seriousness, and **consequences will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by project management or the relevant direct supervisor**, following the principles outlined below.

Levels of Breach

YELLOW - Warning

- An unintentional mistake (e.g., lack of awareness, misunderstanding, oversight).
- Provides a chance to reflect and adjust behavior.

ORANGE - Serious Warning

- An intentional breach with medium consequences, where the individual shows openness to reflect and correct their behavior.
- Includes repeated breaches after a YELLOW warning.

RED - Dismissal

- A serious breach or misconduct (e.g., criminal behavior, actions with severe consequences, lack of transparency, or refusal to reflect on inappropriate behavior).
- Causes significant impact for the people involved or the organization's resources, including time and reputation.

Comment: Every situation is unique and cannot be fully defined in advance. Consequences will always be analyzed and applied individually, taking into account the intent, impact, and willingness to reflect on behavior.

Feedback and Transparency

In the induction we will explain and discuss every paragraph of the Code of Conduct in detail and most of the content is common sense. But the trickiest questions usually occur during the challenges of everyday work, and the right answer might not always be easy to find. Selfm.aid therefore encourages an open dialogue. We have always an open ear for questions and concerns. If you are not sure whether your behavior or reaction to a certain event was appropriate, please always seek dialogue with us. We prefer to review and discuss such situations together than to be informed about breaches of the Code of Conduct through a third party.

In a nutshell:

- Focus your energy on **supporting the projects** rather than individual relationships. This strengthens structures that help everyone, including future team members.
- Raise needs or concerns in team meetings to find **solutions that benefit the collective** (e.g., group activities rather than private arrangements).
- Remember, individuals come and go, but projects of selfm.aid endure. By investing in the organization, you help preserve and **improve the environment for all current and future participants.**

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Definition in this CoC:

- **Participants:** Asylum seekers living in the camp or similar accommodation settings who engage with the projects of selfm.aid as community volunteers or customers.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** All hired or external volunteer members of the selfm.aid team, including staff from different backgrounds (local, international and people granted asylum).

1. Professional Relationships I (EXTERNAL - Locals and other Actors)

You are the **face of selfm.aid**. A good reputation and strong cooperation with local communities, governmental authorities, and other organizations are crucial for our work.

Important: Especially in small communities or on islands, new faces are quickly recognized. Your actions, even during free time, can reflect on selfm.aid. Breaches of the Code of Conduct **outside of working hours can seriously harm the organization**. Always act respectfully and professionally, whether at work or in your personal time.

- 1.1 **Always uphold local laws and regulations**, including traffic rules, alcohol and drug restrictions, and other legal obligations. (**YELLOW** for minor violations - **RED** for criminal acts: depending on the seriousness of the breach).
- 1.2 **Respect authorities:** Always follow the instructions of authorities, including camp management, police, coast guard, or military personnel. Never take photos or videos of authorities, facilities, or restricted areas without explicit permission, as this may lead to arrest or confiscation of equipment. (**ORANGE** to **RED**)
- 1.3 **Professional relationships with organizations and communities:** Maintain respectful and constructive relationships with locals, governmental bodies, international NGOs, and grassroots organizations like selfm.aid. Promote **positive collaboration**, avoid negative comments about other actors, and offer feedback professionally. (**ORANGE:** Disrespectful behavior toward locals, colleagues, or other actors will be treated seriously.)

2. Professional Relationships II (INTERNAL - within our projects)

- 2.1 Every individual must be treated with **dignity and respect**. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination (language, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or other). **ORANGE**
- 2.2 Respect ALL our participants. **Never withhold** humanitarian assistance, **nor give preferential treatment**. Never abuse the power and influence, carried by virtue of the respective position, over the lives and wellbeing of others. **ORANGE**
- 2.3 Be aware of and **respect cultural differences**. It is not our role to try and assimilate or actively introduce anyone to any perception of "Western Culture". **YELLOW**
- 2.4 Although we will automatically develop trust and cooperation in our working relationships with people on the move, we must **respect the necessary professional boundaries** and the remits of their role for safety and security purposes, and to reduce the potential for harm. **YELLOW**
- 2.5 Do not agree to **meet** community members **outside of work**. Maintain professional boundaries and invest your energy into the project – so it remains accessible for everyone, including those who will join in the future, and not only for a few individuals you have personally selected. This also applies to **private communication** via social media, WhatsApp, or other messaging platforms. Please use the official work chats if you need to discuss anything urgent regarding our projects. **YELLOW**
- 2.6 **Never give false promises** or answer a question if you are **unsure or unqualified**. We cannot provide guidance on asylum procedures, residence duration, medical matters, or similar inquiries. Communicate this clearly and let the person know that you will follow up. The coordinator will then determine the appropriate **referral** or source of information to assist them. **YELLOW**
- 2.7 **Rumors** are spreading fast and without control among the communities and in the camp, thus they can have a large and sometimes unintended impact. So please, never spread information you are not sure about. When in doubt, always contact a coordinator. **YELLOW**
- 2.8 Please always remember that the people on the move we work with may have had traumatic experiences and may still experience repercussions from these. Therefore, we must **avoid questions of a sensitive nature** since this can result in lasting damage when not professionally handled. **YELLOW**

2.9 Never engage in an **emotionally or financially exploitative relationship**. **RED**

2.10 **Sexual and romantic relations between staff / volunteers and participants** are prohibited, on the basis of recognizing the possibility of exploitative behavior. Create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, abuse of power and corruption, and promotes the implementation of this CoC. **RED**

2.11 Never engage in any **sexual activity with children** and minors (persons under the age of 18) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Sexual activity with children and minors is strictly prohibited. Mistaken belief in the age of a child or minor is not a defense. We will in any case initiate legal action. **RED**

3. Professional Standards at Work / Work Safety

The workshops and spaces provided by **selfm.aid** are well-equipped environments designed to empower everyone involved, foster growth, and encourage learning from each other. To maintain this positive and safe environment, we expect everyone to follow the rules and standards below.

3.1 **Commitment to the Project and Teamwork:** Keeping the projects of selfm.aid running smoothly requires dedication and teamwork. Everyone is expected to **take their role seriously, engage fully, and contribute professionally** at all times. **YELLOW**

3.2 **Respect and Support for the Team:** Our team is our most valuable resource. Be fair, supportive, and proactive in your interactions. Participate actively in team meetings, be punctual, and communicate if you need to leave your shift or are unavailable. Availability and communication help the team function effectively. **YELLOW**

3.3 **Mutual Respect and Learning:** Treat everyone you work with on an equal footing, regardless of background, culture, or experience. The core value of our projects is openness - learning from each other rather than imposing a personal "right way" of doing things. Safety rules always take priority. **YELLOW**

3.4 **Safety and Care of the Workspace:** Everyone must wear appropriate work and safety clothing suited to the environment and cultural context. Adhere to safety protocols at all times to prevent accidents. **ORANGE**

- Treat the workshops with respect.
- Clean up after yourself and report completed tasks or missing materials.

- Always follow safety protocols and instructions.

3.5 **Machine Usage:** Machines may only be used **after proper instruction** and always in accordance with **safety guidelines**. Misuse endangers yourself and others. **ORANGE**

3.6 **Substance Use:** Working under the influence of alcohol or other substances is strictly prohibited. It endangers everyone and will be treated as a serious breach. **RED**

3.7 **Theft or Unauthorized Removal:** Unauthorized removal, theft, or sale of any items, property, or funds from the projects of **selfm.aid** is strictly prohibited and will lead to immediate dismissal. **RED**

4. Photography / Social Media

4.1 **Respect and Dignity:** All individuals must be treated with dignity. Always **ask for consent** before taking a photo and respect their wishes if they decline. Never pressure anyone to be photographed or make them feel obliged out of politeness or respect. **YELLOW**

4.2 **Publication and Safety Risks:** The publication of any individual's image can potentially be dangerous for people on the move. Only share photos if explicit, informed consent has been given and double-check that the person truly feels comfortable. **Protect identities and privacy at all times.** **ORANGE**

4.3 **Restricted Areas and Authorities:** Do not take photographs of authorities, camps, military sites, coast guard facilities, or any restricted areas. Unauthorized photography in these contexts may lead to confiscation of equipment or legal consequences. **ORANGE**

4.4 **Minors:** For safeguarding reasons, taking or sharing photos of minors is strictly prohibited without explicit written parental consent. Violations are considered a serious breach. **RED**

4.5 **Use of AI Platforms:** Uploading or processing photographs of participants, staff, or project contexts on AI-based platforms or tools is strictly prohibited. This includes image analysis, enhancement, or storage via AI services, due to data protection and safeguarding risks. **RED**

5. Confidentiality

Open-Source vs. Personal Data: selfm.aid fosters a **culture of transparency and shared knowledge**. Materials classified as “open source” by the organization may be shared and used by everyone during and after the assignment. **This does not apply to personal or sensitive data!**

- 5.1 **Storage of Personal Data:** Do not store personal data of participants on your personal devices. Use only secure organizational platforms (e.g., EZ-Facility, Nextcloud) to handle sensitive information. **ORANGE**
- 5.2 **Protect Participant Data:** Always **safeguard the personal data** of participants, even **after your assignment** ends. The publication of names, dates, images, or other identifying information can **put participants at serious risk and is a violation of data protection law**. **ORANGE**
- 5.3 **Handling Sensitive Information:** Confidential information relating to **participants, volunteers, staff, or organizational operations** must not be shared publicly (e.g., social media, public spaces). This includes details on staff, meetings, funding, or internal processes. If unsure whether information is sensitive, consult the coordinator before sharing. **ORANGE**
- 5.4 **Publications:** When **publishing content** about your stay, assignment, or project context - **during or after your time with selfm.aid** - always **respect data protection** rules. For safety reasons, it is strongly recommended to **review your publication** with the organization beforehand. **ORANGE**
- 5.5 **Use of AI Platforms:** Sensitive or personal data must not be uploaded, processed, or shared with **AI-based platforms or tools**. This includes the use of AI services during reporting, monitoring, evaluation, or database-related tasks, due to data protection and confidentiality risks. **ORANGE**

6. Welfare

- 6.1 **Prioritize Your Wellbeing:** Humanitarian work can be physically and emotionally demanding. Always take your **mental and physical health seriously**. Engage **actively in the self-care activities** offered by selfm.aid and other actors and make time to rest and recharge.

6.2 Scheduled Breaks: To maintain your well-being, you are expected to take two days off per week. For longer-term assignments, a minimum of 14 consecutive days off is required for every three months of your stay. Breaks will be scheduled at the **start of your assignment** to ensure appropriate planning of our operations.

6.3 Additional Support: If you feel unwell, overwhelmed, or need extra time off, communicate this promptly. **selfm.aid** is committed to supporting each team member, and someone will always be available to cover your responsibilities if needed.

7. In case of emergency

Since we are working in a fragile context, we **need to be ready for emergencies** at any time. Please always have the emergency contacts with you (Police, Ambulance, Hospital) and make sure you have enough credit to call.

- National emergency center: 166
HOSPITAL OF SAMOS ("AGIOS PANTELEIMON"): +30 22730 83100
- Police Emergency Number: 100
POLICE DEPARTMENT OF SAMOS: +30 22730 22100, +30 22730 87315
- Fire Department: 199
FIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAMOS: +30 22730 22199, +30 22730 23062
- Coast Guard Emergency Number: 108
PORT AUTHORITY OF SAMOS: +30 22730 27318

8. Reporting

If you find yourself in a situation where you feel uncomfortable with the behavior of a person, who is approaching you physically or in any other way you feel is inappropriate: let the person know how you feel (if you can) and immediately consult us, the coordinators, project management or other staff of selfm.aid. **Our projects are a safe space for everyone, and the wellbeing of all the participants is our highest priority!**

If you observe staff or partners associated with selfm.aid breaching the code of conduct or concerns relating to the principles of "do not harm" please contact the project management immediately. If you don't feel comfortable reporting to the project management (for example if you feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if they

are implicated in the concern) you may report to the director or in case of whistleblowing-concerns to the responsible person within the board.

- **Project Management:** Jasper Duivenstijn (jasper@selfm-aid.ch) and Katharina Scholle (katharina.scholle@selfm-aid.ch)
- **Director:** Julia Minder (julia.minder@selfm-aid.ch)
- **Whistleblowing Board:** Noor Qaiser (noor.qaiser@selfm-aid.ch)

For all other concerns and further details about the processes how selfm.aid is handling complains, please consider **our whistleblowing policy**.