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## **CODE OF ETHICS**

on

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

### **and Accountability**



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### Index

Premise	Pag.	4
1. The Code of Conduct's purpose	Pag.	4
2. How we work	Pag.	5
3. Areas of intervention	Pag.	6
3.1. Surgery	Pag.	6
3.2. Medicine	Pag.	6
3.3. Rehabilitation and social reintegration	Pag.	7
4. Our stakeholder	Pag.	7
5. Principles	Pag.	7
6. Reporting	Pag.	11
7. Audit	Pag.	11
8. Accuracy of information	Pag.	11
9. Good governance	Pag.	11
10. Ethical Fundraising	Pag.	12
10.1. Donors	Pag.	12
10.2. Use of Donations	Pag.	12
10.3. Gifts in kind	Pag.	13
11. Professional Management	Pag.	13
12. Financial controls	Pag.	13
13. Evaluation	Pag.	13
14. Public Criticism	Pag.	13
15. Partners	Pag.	13
16. Human Resources	Pag.	14
17. Equal opportunity employment	Pag.	14
18. Respect for Sexual Integrity	Pag.	14
19. Conflict of Interests	Pag.	14
20. Child protection	Pag.	15
21. Bribery and Corruption	Pag.	15
22. Whistle-blowers	Pag.	15
23. Implementation of the Code	Pag.	15

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

## PREMISE

**Emergency is a humanitarian non-profit organisation funded in Italy in 1994.**

Emergency **mission** is:

- to provide high-quality, free of charge medical, surgical and rehabilitative care in war-torn areas;
- to promote a culture of peace, solidarity and respect of human rights.

Emergency fully endorse the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanitarian imperative. Attention is also given to sustainable long-term development, local capacity building, environmental protection and other public goods.

Our organisation is proud and privileged to work across a wide range of countries and cultures, with a diverse range of peoples and in varied economic, social and political systems.

Our legitimacy is also derived from the quality of our work, and the recognition and support of the people with and for whom we work and our members, our donors, the wider public, and governmental and other organisations around the world.

By adopting this Code of Conduct Emergency seeks to promote further the values of humanitarian aid, transparency and accountability and commits to fully respecting its provisions.

### 1. The Code of Conduct's purpose

This Code of Conduct outlines Emergency's commitment to humanitarian principles, excellence, transparency and accountability. To demonstrate and build on these commitments, Emergency seeks to:

- identify and define shared principles, policies and practices;
- improve its performance and effectiveness as organisation;
- encourage communication with stakeholders; and
- enhance transparency and accountability, both internally and externally.

We identify humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence as constitutive principles of its humanitarian interventions.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 4 di 15
----------------	-------------------	----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

We recognise our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed without any partisan or political scope.

We are aware that transparency and accountability are essential to good governance, whether by governments, businesses or non-profit organisations.

The Code of Conduct complements and supplements existing laws and regulation procedures. It is a voluntary code and draws on a range of existing codes, norms, standards and guidelines.

Emergency agrees to apply the Code of Conduct progressively to all its policies, activities and operations.

The Code of Conduct does not replace existing codes or practices to which Emergency may also abide, unless differently stated. Its adoption does not prevent our organisation from supporting or using other tools to promote humanitarian aid, transparency and accountability.

Emergency will revise the Code of Conduct through experience, taking into account future developments, particularly those that improve accountability and transparency.

## 2. How we work

Our organisation can complement but not replace the over-arching role and primary responsibility of governments to promote equitable human development and wellbeing, to uphold human rights and to protect ecosystems.

Emergency seeks to advance its mission through research, advocacy campaigns and the humanitarian programmes that it runs. It is common for our work to be at the international, national, regional and local levels, either directly or with partners.

Emergency works with other organisations where this may contribute to meet its individual missions.

In order to assert the right to healthcare for everyone, Emergency:

- provides health care totally free of charge;
- guarantees treatment to anyone in need of assistance, without any sort of discrimination;
- practices high quality medicine, employing standardized therapeutic and working protocols already tested in emergency situations;
- trains local staff thoroughly until complete operational independence is achieved.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 5 di 15
----------------	-------------------	----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

Emergency designs, builds and manages through its international staff:

- hospitals for victims of war and surgical emergencies;
- rehabilitation and social reintegration centres;
- first aid posts for emergency treatment;
- basic health centres for primary healthcare;
- paediatric and maternity centres;
- clinics and mobile clinics for migrants and persons in need, providing also cultural mediation services and psychological assistance;
- centres of excellence.

### **3. Areas of intervention**

#### **3.1 - SURGERY**

- Paediatric and Adult Cardiac Surgery;
- Surgery for victims of war and landmines;
- Emergency and trauma surgery;
- General surgery;
- Orthopaedic surgery;
- Plastic and reconstructive surgery;
- Ophthalmic surgery;
- First Aid

#### **3.2 - MEDICINE**

- Cardiology;
- Primary health care;
- Internal medicine;
- Neonatology;
- Ophthalmology;
- Obstetrics and gynaecology;
- Paediatrics.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 6 di 15
----------------	-------------------	----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

### **3.3 - REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION**

- Physiotherapy;
- Production of prostheses and orthosis;
- Vocational training and setting up of small business cooperatives for the physically disabled.

## **4. Our stakeholders**

Our first responsibility is to achieve our stated mission effectively and transparently, consistently with our core values. In doing this, we are accountable to our stakeholders.

Our stakeholders include:

- People whose life and rights we seek to protect and advance;
- Our members and supporters;
- Our staff and volunteers;
- Organisations and individuals that contribute finance, goods or services to achieve our statutory goals;
- Partner organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, with whom we work;
- Regulatory bodies whose agreement is required for our establishment and operations;
- Actors those whose policies, programmes or behaviour we wish to influence;
- The general public; and
- The media.

In balancing the different views of our stakeholders, Emergency is guided by its mission, as stated in its bylaws, and the principles of this Code of Conduct.

## **5. Principles**

### ***The World We Want***

Emergency believes in the equality of all human beings, regardless of their opinions, sex, race; of their ethnic, political, religious background and belonging; of their social status and financial condition.

Emergency repudiates the use of violence, terrorism and war as instruments to resolve the disputes between individuals, peoples, nations.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 7 di 15
----------------	-------------------	----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

Emergency hopes for a world based on social justice, on solidarity, on reciprocal respect, on dialogue, on an equal distribution of resources.

Emergency hopes for a world in which governments guarantee the basic equality of all members of society and the right to medical treatment that is both of a high standard and free; the right to a public education system that develops each person, each human being, enriching their knowledge and intellect; the right to free information media.

### ***Respect for Universal Principles***

NGOs are founded on the rights to freedom of speech, assembly and association in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Emergency seeks to advance international and national laws which promote good health for all, human rights, sustainable development and other public goods.

Emergency endorses and campaigns for the fully recognition of the fundamental Right to Health defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1946).

Where such laws do not exist, are not fully implemented, or abused, we highlight these issues for public debate and advocate appropriate remedial action.

In doing so, we respect the equal rights and dignity of all human beings.

### ***Equality, Quality and Social Responsibility***

Emergency advocates the implementation of health systems and projects solely devoted to preserve, extend and improve the life of the people in need and based on the following principles:

#### **Equality**

Every human being has the right to be cured regardless his economic and social condition, gender, race, language, religion and opinions.

Standards of health care, set by the progress of medical knowledge, must be delivered equally and without discrimination to all patients.

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

### Quality

High quality health systems must be based on community's needs, up to date with the achievements of medical science, and not oriented, shaped or determined by lobbies and corporations involved in the health industry.

### Social Responsibility

Governments must have the health and well-being of their citizens as their priority, and allocate adequate human and financial resources.

The services provided by health systems and humanitarian projects in the health sector must be accessible to and free of charge for all.

### ***Humanity***

The principle of humanity means the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population. The dignity of all victims must be respected and protected.

### ***Neutrality***

Neutrality means that humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute.

### ***Impartiality***

Impartiality denotes that humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations.

### ***Independence***

Respect for independence means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives, and serves to ensure that the sole purpose of humanitarian aid remains to relieve and prevent the suffering of victims of humanitarian crises.

### ***Humanitarian imperative***

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 9 di 15
----------------	-------------------	----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

As members of the international community, Emergency recognizes the obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility.

When Emergency gives humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

#### ***Responsible advocacy***

Emergency ensures that its advocacy is consistent with the statutory mission, grounded in the work and advances defined public interests.

Emergency has clear processes for adopting public policy positions (including for partners where appropriate), explicit ethical policies that guide the choices of advocacy strategy and ways of identifying and managing potential conflicts of interest among various stakeholders.

#### ***Effective Programmes***

Emergency seeks to work in genuine partnership with local authorities, communities, NGOs and other organisations aiming at sustainable development effectively responding to local needs.

#### ***Non-Discrimination***

Emergency values, respect and encourage diversity, and is impartial and nondiscriminatory in all activities.

To this end, Emergency has policies that promote diversity, gender equity and balance, impartiality and non-discrimination in all our activities, both internally and globally.

#### ***Transparency and Accountability***

Emergency is committed to openness, transparency and honesty about our structures, mission, policies and activities.

Emergency actively communicates to stakeholders and make information about our work publicly available.

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

## 6. Reporting

Emergency complies with relevant governance, financial accounting and reporting requirements in the countries where it is based and operates reporting to the public at least once a year on our activities and achievements.

Reports describe the organisation:

- Mission and values;
- Programmes and projects managed;
- Objectives and outcomes achieved, including statistics;
- Governance structure and processes, and main office bearers;
- Main sources of funding from corporations, foundations, governments, and individuals;
- Financial performance and balance sheet;
- Contact details.

## 7. Audit

The annual financial report conforms to relevant laws and practices and is audited by a qualified independent public accountant whose statement accompanies the report.

A soft copy is always available on Emergency's website for public access.

## 8. Accuracy of information

Emergency adheres to generally-accepted standards of technical accuracy and honesty in presenting and interpreting data and research, using and referencing independent research.

## 9. Good Governance

Emergency is responsible for the actions and achievements having a clear mission, organisational structure and decision-making processes; by acting in accordance with stated values and agreed procedures; by ensuring that the programmes achieve outcomes that are consistent with its statutory mission; and by reporting on these outcomes in an open and accurate manner.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 11 di 15
----------------	-------------------	-----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

The governance structure of Emergency conforms to relevant laws and be transparent.

The organisation has:

- A governing body which supervises and evaluates the chief executive,
- and oversees programmes and budgetary matters. Such body defines the overall strategy, consistently with the organisational mission, ensures that resources are used efficiently and appropriately, that performances are measured, that financial integrity is assured and that public trust is maintained;
- Written procedures covering the appointment, responsibilities and terms of members of the governing body.
- Open discussion tools to listen to stakeholders' suggestions on how improve work, programmes and policies through our official web site.

## 10. Ethical Fundraising

### 10.1. Donors

Emergency respects the rights of donors:

- to be informed about causes for which we are fundraising;
- to be informed about how their donation is being used;
- to be regularly updated about the ongoing programmes;
- to have proper visibility towards the public.

### 10.2. Use of Donations

In raising funds, Emergency accurately describes activities and needs.

The policies and practices ensure that donations further the organisation's mission.

Where donations are made for a specific purpose, the donor's request is honoured.

When Emergency invites the general public to donate to a specific cause, the organisation has a plan for handling any shortfall or excess, and makes this known as part of its appeal.

### 10.3. Gifts in kind

Some donations are given as goods or services.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 12 di 15
----------------	-------------------	-----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

To retain the effectiveness and independence, Emergency:

- records details of all major institutional gifts and gifts-in-kind;
- describes the valuation and auditing methods used;
- ensures that these gifts contribute towards the mission.

## **11. Professional Management**

We manage our organisation in a professional and effective manner. Our policies and procedures seek to promote excellence in all respects.

## **12. Financial controls**

Internal financial control procedures ensure that all funds are effectively used and minimise the risk of funds being misused. Emergency follow principles of best practice in financial management.

## **13. Evaluation**

Emergency seeks continuously to improve its own effectiveness. Emergency has defined evaluation procedures and mechanism for the board, staff, programmes and projects on the basis of mutual accountability.

## **14. Public Criticism**

Emergency is responsible towards the public criticisms of individuals and organisations, ensuring such criticism amounts to fair public comment.

## **15. Partners**

Emergency ensure the respect of the highest standards of probity and accountability by all the partners and takes all possible steps to guarantee that there are no links with organisations, or persons involved in illegal or unethical practices.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 13 di 15
----------------	-------------------	-----------------

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

## **16. Human Resources**

Emergency is fully aware that the performance and success reflect the quality of the staff and volunteers and their management practices and is committed in investing in human resource development.

Remuneration and benefits are strike a balance between public expectations of voluntary-based, not-for-profit organisations and the need to attract and retain the staff is needed to fulfil the mission. The human resources policy is conformed to relevant international and national labour regulations and applies the best voluntary sector practices in terms of employee and volunteer rights and health and safety at work.

Human resources policy includes training activities and procedures for evaluating the performance of all staff on a regular basis.

## **17. Equal opportunity employment**

Emergency guarantees an equal access to employment opportunities in all the steps of recruitment and management of human resources: publicity of vacancies, recruitment procedures, condition of employment, promotion and career development, disciplinary acts and monitoring.

## **18. Respect for Sexual Integrity**

Emergency condemns sexual exploitation, abuse and discrimination in all its forms. All policies respect sexual integrity in all our programmes and activities, and prohibit gender harassment, sexual exploitation and discrimination.

## **19. Conflict of Interests**

All employees, members of board and collaborators have as their unique and principle aim the prosecution of the interests and objects of the organization.

Hence everybody is requested to avoid any situation of conflict of interests and any situation that might compromise the impartiality and neutrality of the actions.

 EMERGENCY www.emergency.it	<b>CODE OF ETHICS</b>	
Drafted	Checked	Approved
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Board of Directors

## **20. Child protection**

Emergency condemns child exploitation and abuse in all its forms.

All policies, programmes and activities respect children, their well-being and development.

## **21. Bribery and Corruption**

Human resources policy specifically prohibits acts of bribery or corruption by staff of other persons working for, or on behalf of, the organisation.

## **22. Whistle-blowers**

Staff, consultants and partners are enabled and encouraged to draw management's attention to activities that may not comply with the law or our mission and commitments, including the provisions in this Code.

## **23. Implementation of the Code**

The Executive Committee takes all necessary actions to ensure and monitor the present Code of Conduct.

In each Country, the Programme Coordinators have the specific mandate to put into practice the implementation of the Code and its principles.

The present Code of Conduct on Humanitarian Assistance and Accountability has been approved and adopted by the resolution of the Board of Directors.

Versione : 1.0	Data : 01/01/2017	Pagina 15 di 15
----------------	-------------------	-----------------