



Fondation Hirondelle Charter

Fondation Hirondelle is a Swiss non-governmental organisation which was founded in 1995. Its mission as established under its statutes is to "provide useful, impartial, independent information to populations which have been deprived of such information due to a situation of conflict, crisis, disaster, or any other situation where their right to information has been violated for any other reason." *Fondation Hirondelle* makes no distinction between the nationality, race, beliefs or creed of the potential beneficiaries of its work."¹

Fondation Hirondelle thus operates at the intersection of journalism, humanitarian action and development, and adheres to those principles and values which set the standard in those areas:

- 1) It aims at giving concrete expression to the fundamental right to information recognised under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That right assumes not only the existence of media which are free to carry on their work, but also assumes they are up to that responsibility. As a result, the work *Fondation Hirondelle* does draws inspiration from the ethical principles set forth in the texts on the obligations and rights of journalists, particularly from the principles of independence and impartiality².
- 2) It joins forces and takes action in order to reduce suffering and violations of human dignity. The work *Fondation Hirondelle* does draws inspiration from the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence which constitute the basis of humanitarian action.
- 3) *Fondation Hirondelle* seeks to contribute towards societies which are peaceful, inclusive, democratic and just, and thus contribute towards development which is truly sustainable.

On the basis of these principles, *Fondation Hirondelle* has derived five commitments and set them out in its Charter. Further documents are provided for the actual implementation of those principles and describe them in detail: the editorial charter (for matters which concern the Foundation's mission), the code of conduct and various policies, in particular those relating to the prevention of abuses in matters which concern operation of the organisation.

- 1) **Independence:** *Fondation Hirondelle is committed to its independence and produces information which is factual, reliable and impartial.* Since it follows no political, economic or religious agenda, its work in the service of the public meets the informational needs of the populations for which it intervenes, whether those needs concern current issues or long-term challenges, especially in the areas of equality, justice, the environment and human rights.
- 2) **Dialogue:** *It strengthens a culture of dialogue within society.* *Fondation Hirondelle* works in a spirit of openness and inclusiveness, encourages points of view which represent the diversity of society, and constantly works to let the voices of minorities, vulnerable groups, and victims of discrimination be heard. It also provides spaces to promote the emergence of shared solutions.
- 3) **Accountability:** *Fondation Hirondelle is aware that it is accountable for its activities, especially towards the public and the organisations which finance it.* It therefore provides information with

¹ Statutes, Articles 2.1 and 2.4

² For examples: the Charter of Munich (1974), the Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists from the International Federation of Journalists (2019) and the best professional practices recommended by UNESCO

complete transparency, especially that concerning its production and processing of information, the impact of its activities and its financing. This transparency also contributes towards its credibility.

- 4) **Proximity:** *It ensures that its actions meet the needs of populations as best as possible:* It selects subjects and participants which are consistent with the needs of each given population and representative of the segments within it (including minorities), forms teams made up of local personnel, and creates productions in local languages. Wherever possible, the Foundation favours collaborations with local partners and works to strengthen their skills.
- 5) **Pragmatism:** *Its work follows a pragmatic approach.* Whether it's setting up emergency radio broadcasting when a disaster occurs or the long-term development of a media to set the standard throughout a country, *Fondation Hirondelle* always starts without preconceived notions and searches for the response which is best adapted to the needs of a given situation. In order to strengthen its core activity of production and broadcasting, it also undertakes activities of training, advocacy and research.

The Charter serves both as a reference for Foundation staff and partners who are required to integrate its principles within their day-to-day business practices, and as an invitation to the Foundation itself to continue and develop the thinking which guides its work.

Adopted by the Board on November 25, 2020