

United Nations Global Compact Speexx Progress Report 2015

To:

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From:

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Statement of continued support by Armin Hopp

Dear Sir / Madam,

In 2012, SpeeXX joined the United Nations Global Compact and thereby committed itself to fully aligning its operational and strategic processes with the Compact's Ten Principles.

The UN Global Compact asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption.

At SpeeXX, we strive to support and disseminate the UN Global Compact's principles in our daily company procedures and to encourage our partners and clients to do the same. Our initiatives, such as 'A Million Chances' donation projects, 'Green Learning' programmes and our ongoing financial support of 'LINGOS' (Learning in NGOs), reflect the Compact's values throughout.

It is clear to us that the systematic incorporation of sustainability concepts in all operative areas of the company remains a continuous task. We are proud to continue our support for the United Nations Global Compact and to renew our ongoing commitment to the initiative and its principles.

Yours faithfully,



Armin Hopp
Founder and President of SpeeXX

About SpeeXX

SpeeXX helps large organisations everywhere to drive productivity by empowering employee communication skills across borders. SpeeXX offers an award-winning range of cloud-based online language learning solutions for Business English, Spanish, German, Italian and French with ongoing support in 13 languages. SpeeXX is easy to use and scales to the needs of users and training managers in organisations of any size. The SpeeXX branded Perfect Blend integrates online business communication skills training, mobile and social learning, expert coaches located throughout the world, and personalised live online activities into one fully standardized, globally consistent learning experience. More than 7 million users in 1,500 organisations – including Ericsson, Airbus, UNHCR and Credit Suisse – use SpeeXX to learn a language smarter and deliver results on time. SpeeXX was founded in 1994 and is headquartered in Munich, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Sao Paulo, Shanghai and Singapore. For more information, visit www.speeXX.com.

Human Rights Principles

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Assessment, Policy and Goals

- *Description of the relevance of human rights for the company (i.e. human rights risk-assessment).
Description of policies, public commitments and company goals on Human Rights.*

Speexx fully supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We ensure that internationally proclaimed human rights are upheld in every stage of our organizational processes and that we are not complicit in any human rights abuses. Article 26 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), is of particular resonance to Speexx. It states:

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Each year, Speexx supports various charity projects through its “A Million Chances” initiative. By supporting education, foreign language skills and sustainability in disadvantaged regions and communities around the world, Speexx hopes to support communities to support themselves in upholding internationally proclaimed human rights.

Our goal in the next reporting period is to conduct a human rights risk-assessment for the company, its partners and suppliers.

Implementation

- *Description of concrete actions to implement Human Rights policies, reduce Human Rights risks and respond to Human Rights violations.*

The majority of our products are produced in-house, where human rights protection is ensured. Our partners and suppliers are selected carefully and evaluated annually as part of our quality management system.

Each year, we donate 1 million Euros' worth of educational products to a variety of projects around the world as part of our charity project “A Million Chances”. By doing what we do best – providing educational opportunities – we are committed to being a reliable partner in building a better future in disadvantaged regions of the world. A Million Chances does this by focusing on three main goals:

- 1) Education - as a springboard for independence and autonomy – is not a given in all regions of the world. It needs to be facilitated and supported.
- 2) Enabling foreign language skills - as a means of breaking down language barriers – is particularly dear to our heart.
- 3) Sustainability - helping victims and children in need to help themselves.

We are determined to continue our engagement in the future.

Measurement of outcomes

- *Description of how the company monitors and evaluates performance.*

The “A Million Chances” project is reviewed by senior management and the Speexx communications department on an annual basis. Each year, new goals and recipients are selected for the following year.

The main projects for 2014, “DisasterReady.org” and “Concern Worldwide”, were met with all round success and great feedback from the project partners. DisasterReady.org’s projects were initiated with a number of charities, including French Medical Institute for Children, E.L.I.S.A. MEDICOPTÈRE, Mercy Corps, UNHCR and Save the Children.

The Concern Worldwide project is now running for over 300 employees all over the world, with numbers growing every day. Speexx has extended its reach and now covers learners in the following countries: Bangladesh, Rwanda, Ireland, Uganda, Zambia, Haiti, Pakistan, Malawi, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Tanzania, Turkey, the UK and the USA. Employees have the chance to improve their English and French through online courseware and virtual classroom sessions free of charge and– all they need is an internet connection. Partners were evaluated in December 2014 and all passed evaluation. There have been no incidents of human rights violations within the last reporting period.

Further information about the Concern project can be found here: <http://blogs.speexx.com/blog/million-chances-concern-worldwide-speexx-mark-one-year-partnership/>

One of Concern’s students from Somalia said:

“Speexx has been very interesting for me. The topics are motivating and engaging, so I’ve spent much more time on it than expected. The learning process is based on leading instructional design as well as a range of exercise levels ranging from easy to difficult.”

- Mohamed Ahmed Tarabi, Somalia

Labour Principles

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Assessment, Policy and Goals

- *Description of the relevance of labour rights for the company (i.e. labour rights-related risks and opportunities). Description of written policies, public commitments and company goals on labour rights.*

Speexx is committed to the international laws, European laws and to the respective national laws. Embedded into this system of laws and human rights, we strongly support and are legally bound to uphold all goals and aims stated in the different legal texts.

Employment contracts are subject to German and European law and therefore contain and respect both, the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. Our employees have the right to establish and appoint a representative committee in order to enforce their rights.

We comply with the stipulations of the Equal Employment Opportunity laws in each country in which we are located.

Implementation

- *Description of concrete actions taken by your company to implement labour policies, reduce labour risks and respond to labour violations.*

All employment contracts are reviewed for compliance to labour laws by our legal consultants in each region. When filling vacancies, applicants with disabilities will be considered with priority if suitable. All employees, regardless of citizenship, race and gender, enjoy the same rights and opportunities at Speexx.

Measurement of outcomes

- *Description of how the company monitors and evaluates performance.*

Labour issues are reviewed by senior management at the end of the business year. There have been no incidents of violation of the Labour principles during the last reporting period.

Environmental Principles

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Assessment, Policy and Goals

- *Description of the relevance of environmental protection for the company (i.e. environmental risks and opportunities). Description of policies, public commitments and company goals on environmental protection*

We want to protect the environment for our future generations. A global low carbon economy lies in the hands of every global citizen. That's why going green at Speexx isn't just a catch phrase – it's a commitment. We are committed to green learning solutions.

Implementation

- *Description of concrete actions to implement environmental policies, reduce environmental risks and respond to environmental incidents*

Speexx is a green learning solution. When learning a language with Speexx, the classroom is the laptop: Learners work on their language improvement online and in a self-paced manner. They are supported and motivated by their personal online coach via email and the live training sessions take place via Virtual Classroom or via telephone. We increasingly encourage our customers to switch from classroom-based lessons to virtual sessions, which are just as effective for learners.

While traditional classrooms rely heavily on paper, the entire Speexx communication is digital: assignments and feedback are sent to the learner and come with the solution as digital files. Tasks and homework can be completed entirely on the computer. Instead of printing out and handing in assignments on paper, learners simply e-mail them to their coach and receive their feedback in the same way.

Speexx students needn't travel to go to class. They can study a language at their own pace at home, at work or at any other place in the world with the online solution. Learning a language with Speexx means entering a classroom without causing CO2 emissions. The live sessions are broadcasted from the teacher's home. The Speexx Virtual Classroom was developed to accommodate the specific needs of language learners; its excellent audio and clear video quality allows learners all over the world to easily communicate with their trainer. This makes Speexx a green language training solution compared to traditional classroom-based courses.

Inside the Speexx offices, we also embrace the environmental principles and prioritize environmentally friendly options wherever we can. Our offices around the world are powered by renewable energy – solar, wind and water. We switched from conventional power suppliers to environmentally friendly and sustainable ones, ensuring that the power we use is green. Instead of supplying plastic bottles with drinks which cause a lot of waste, Speexx offers large glass carafes which can be refilled, washed and reused at work.

With our corporate-wide virtual conferencing infrastructure, we needn't travel thousands of miles around the world. Instead, we meet, train and collaborate – and reduce our travel emissions to a minimum.

We're green – right down to our IT. Our IT department prides itself on its green credentials, always choosing energy efficient computers, servers and devices and ensuring that equipment across the board is consistently re-used, recycled or donated.

Our staff adheres to the slogan: being green means being mean – mean with fuel emissions, that is. The Speexx 'green travel policy' actively encourages the use of public transportation, bicycles (which we encourage by supplying a company bike pump), video conferencing and telecommuting.

Recycling and using recycled materials has been a standard practice at Speexx since the company's inception. All recyclables are recycled. And where paper is unavoidable, we make every sheet count – on both sides.

Measurement of outcomes

- *Description of how the company monitors and evaluates environmental performance*

Our customer satisfaction is regularly measured and evaluated via online surveys as an essential part of our quality management system. This includes an overall assessment of our 'green' language training solution.

Environmental issues are reviewed by our senior management team at the end of each business year. There have been no incidents of violation of the Environmental principles during the last reporting period.

Anti-Corruption Principles

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

Assessment, policy and goals

- *Description of the relevance of anti-corruption for the company (i.e. anti-corruption risk-assessment).
Description of policies, public commitments and company goals on anti-corruption.*

Speexx | digital publishing has a policy of zero-tolerance for corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Our standard employment contract, which is signed by every employee, contains an anti-corruption clause, in which is stated that the employee is required to inform the company of any attempt by suppliers, partner or clients to give him/her personal gifts or benefits, and that the employee may not accept this type of gift or benefit.

Our goal in the first year of Global Compact membership was to implement an Anti-Corruption policy for the company and to introduce a training session on the topic for employees. In the years to come, we aim to conduct a risk-assessment and to set up an effective compliance system for our partners and suppliers.

Implementation

- *Description of concrete actions to implement anti-corruption policies, address anti-corruption risks and respond to incidents.*

In April 2014, an Anti-Corruption policy outlining the company's position of zero-tolerance was approved by the Management Board and subsequently communicated to all employees and published on our company-internal wiki, to which all employees have access.

In addition, awareness and knowledge of the issue has been increased by the implementation of a training session on anti-corruption which is now a required training component of all employees in the sales, management and finance departments.

Measurement of outcomes

- *Description of how the company monitors and evaluates anti-corruption performance.*

The Anti-Corruption training is a standard part of our onboarding process for new employees, thus maintaining awareness of the issue throughout the company. Trainings and attendance are monitored in our internal HR management system.