

# (Personal) Risk Assessment Sheet

To be completed before travel

This document by the German Anthropological Association (GAA) is based on the ['Frankfurt Declaration' of Research Ethics in Social and Cultural Anthropology](#) and on the Association's Position Paper on Research Ethics. In combination with the two aforementioned documents, it addresses anthropologists before starting ethnographic research in order to ...

... make them aware of the potential risks linked with their research.

... help them prepare for potential health and safety risks.

... be a reminder that they need to take good care of themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The contents included in this document are personal and confidential. Yet, depending on your research plans, it can be advisable to share some of its information (e.g. contact details) with a trustworthy person in your research institution so that it can be used in case of emergency.

Researcher	
Name	Contact details
Names of accompanying family members (if applicable)	Contact details

<b>Title of research project</b>
<b>List of all planned field sites</b>
<b>Duration and dates of field research</b>
<b>Collaboration with local universities, research institutes and/or individual scholars</b>

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<sup>1</sup> See also the Ethics Statement of the DGSKA Medical Anthropology Working Group: “One has the responsibility to oneself not to engage in any research that gravely affects one’s physical or psychological health. Should such dangers come to pass during the research, responsibility towards oneself means that one should seriously consider terminating the research.” (<https://www.medicalanthropology.de/english/ethics/>).

<b>Travel and Safety Advice of the German Federal Foreign Office</b>
<p>If you are conducting your research abroad, please check the current advice posted on the Federal Foreign Office's website (FFO):  <a href="https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Laenderinformationen/SicherheitshinweiseA-Z-Laenderauswahlseite_node.html">https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Laenderinformationen/SicherheitshinweiseA-Z-Laenderauswahlseite_node.html</a></p>
<p>How does the FFO advice relate to your planned research activities? Do you have any local knowledge of the current situation? On what basis do you consider that the FFO advice can be tempered? What actions are you putting in place to minimise the risks highlighted by the FFO, if there are any?</p>
<b>Crisis Management</b>
<p>What actions will you take following serious health problems or an accident, an extreme weather event, the outbreak of a political crisis or any other significant and potentially dangerous change of the situation in your research site? How will you access first aid and medical treatment? What is your emergency plan in the event of needing to leave the country in case you are doing research abroad?</p>

<b>Risk and other issues to consider</b>	<b>Measures and comments</b>
<p><b><u>Documentation</u></b>            Have you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ checked that you have all the documents you need to work in the area (valid passport/visa/local registration and/or research permissions/yellow fever and/or other mandatory vaccination certificate)?</li> <li>▪ got spare copies of all documents?</li> <li>▪ left copies of passports and visas, an itinerary (if possible) and your emergency contacts with the relevant administrative unit at your university or research institution?</li> <li>▪ checked that your insurance covers everything you may need, and do you have a</li> </ul>	

<p>copy of the policy and the contact phone number?</p>	
<p><b><u>Transport</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How will you travel to your destination?</li> <li>▪ If you are flying how will you travel to and from the airport? Please avoid nighttime flight arrivals where possible, and check the safety record of the airline you will fly with.</li> <li>▪ How will you travel within the country? Will you drive a car or motorbike on your own? Do you have the necessary permits?</li> <li>▪ Will you be travelling at night or in remote areas? If so, what are your arrangements in the event of problems en-route, such as an emergency or a vehicle breakdown?</li> <li>▪ Are there any local travel problems you may encounter? If “yes”, please specify.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Security</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is your accommodation during fieldwork secure and in a safe area? Please specify.</li> <li>▪ How will you familiarize yourself with local laws and conventions, the political situation, local tensions, sensitive issues and areas to avoid?</li> <li>▪ Have you checked local legal restrictions concerning the consumption of drugs and alcohol?</li> <li>▪ Are you following country-specific news, and have you subscribed to country-specific newsletters?</li> <li>▪ Do you need to carry cash with you, and will you have access to contingency funds while abroad?</li> <li>▪ What personal safety measures will you take when moving in public spaces (e.g. using licensed taxis, not wearing expensive looking clothes or jewelry, using a cheap mobile phone)?</li> <li>▪ Do you need to register with a local authority on arrival?</li> <li>▪ Have you considered data security?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Fieldwork/Activities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are there people you will be in contact with during your research who might engage in violent activities? If yes, what are your strategies and arrangements to protect yourself (and possibly others) when unintentionally being thrown into a violent situation?</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How will interviews and participant observation be arranged, and where will they take place?</li> <li>▪ What role will gate keepers play in your research? How would you cope with the possible ambivalent role of gate keepers concerning loyalty in the field?</li> <li>▪ How could your questions or quest for information put you, your accompanying family members (if applicable) or your research participants / research partner(s) in danger? What will you do to minimize that risk?</li> <li>▪ Will someone be informed of your whereabouts and estimated time of return?</li> <li>▪ If you fail to return within a reasonable time, what action will be taken by your local contacts?</li> <li>▪ Be ready to reflect on the potential emotional impact of your research on yourself, your accompanying family members (if applicable) as well as on your research participants / research partner(s) and consider how you might cope with it.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Health and medical issues</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you have any health issues, have you checked whether you and, if applicable, your accompanying family members are fit to travel?</li> <li>▪ Are there health alerts for the area? If yes, please obtain medical advice in good time either from the medical representative at your university or your personal doctor.</li> <li>▪ If you need medication, have you checked it will be available in the country of your research?</li> <li>▪ Do you need vaccinations and if so, have you had these in good time? Please confirm (a) what vaccinations you have already had, (b) whether malaria prophylaxis is recommended, and (c) whether there are any other precautions you need to take (e.g. mosquito bite avoidance measures for malaria and dengue fever).</li> <li>▪ Do you need to carry a first aid pack?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Gender and sexual orientation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did you consider that and how gender relations and local gender orders can affect your access to the field?</li> <li>▪ Are you aware of particular prejudices and stigmas related to your gender and sexual</li> </ul>	

<p>orientation in the country/area you are travelling and working?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have you considered being at risk of being exposed to gender stigmatisation and/or sexual violence?</li> <li>▪ How will you get help in case of harassment? For instance, have you reflected on whether making sexual harassment a topic of (semi)public discussion would be helpful for yourself and/or others in your research site?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Communication</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will you be able to communicate via mobile phone?</li> <li>▪ Will you have signal in the area(s) you are visiting?</li> <li>▪ Will you be able to recharge your battery?</li> <li>▪ Will you report regularly to your family at home and your university or research institution while you are away?</li> <li>▪ What happens if they do not hear from you or in case you've misplaced your phone or have it stolen?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Contingency Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can you access first aid or medical treatment? Do you know where the nearest health centre and hospital will be and what the telephone number is to call emergency services?</li> <li>▪ Have you checked the closest institution with a potential stock of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis medication (e.g. in case you step into a needle)?</li> <li>▪ Do you have evacuation routes planned in case of local disturbances, severe illness or injury?</li> <li>▪ Do you have a network of local contacts who can help you in an emergency? Please specify.</li> <li>▪ Do you know how to contact your nearest embassy?</li> <li>▪ Have you entered your details into the ELEFAND system (<a href="https://elefand.diplo.de/elefandextern/home/login!form.action">https://elefand.diplo.de/elefandextern/home/login!form.action</a>)</li> <li>▪ How will you contact family at home and/or your university in case of an emergency?</li> <li>▪ How will you get help if you are a victim of robbery?</li> <li>▪ Did you inform your bank about your stay abroad? And did you determine a person</li> </ul>	

<p>who can send you money in case of emergency?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Do you have sufficient funds?</li></ul>	
<p><b><u>Any other risks?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are there any other risks associated with your area or travel or your planned activities?</li></ul>	