



South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children [SAIEVAC]

SAARC Apex Body

"In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC"

General Child Protection Policy for Meeting/Consultation Organized or Supported by SAIEVAC

BACKGROUND

All participants to any of the meeting/consultation organized or supported by SAIEVAC must be committed to combating all forms of Violence Against Children. All participants must respect and support the right of all children and young people to be free from exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect both physically and emotionally as spelt out in international instruments and standards to protect children and young people. Denial of these rights to children and young people can never be acceptable and subject to justification and further actions.

All participants also recognize that there is a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that children and young people are protected from exploitation, abuse, violence, and neglect from any of the meeting/consultation organized or supported by SAIEVAC and, support staff, and ancillary personnel, older youth, professional consultants, media representatives, volunteers, interns, and all others with whom there may be contact during the Consultation and Meeting period both within and outside the venues both directly or indirectly.

All participants must ensure and protect children and young people from all forms of sexual exploitation within its network and participating organisations leading up to, during, and in the follow up processes of such meeting/consultation. Within or outside the domain of work, people associated with the consultation have a duty to demonstrate respect and confidentiality with all children and young people.

Children and young people can be potentially subject to exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect in families, communities, institutions, organisations, private places, public places by various circumstances by variety of people, including delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel people associated with the meeting/consultation. In order to address and protect children and young people from potential abuse and exploitation in the processes of children's participation in such meeting/consultation this Child Protection Policy has been developed.

OBJECTIVES

This Policy is developed to ensure the best possible standards of professional behavior and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children and young people in the meetings/consultations organized and supported by SAIEVAC as well as the follow up activities, both within and outside of the SAIEVAC Regional Consultation.

SCOPE

Organizers of the meeting/consultation must be prepared to ensure that all delegates, support staff, and participants act in accordance with all provisions of this policy, and do no harm to children and young people who may come into their contact within or outside their work.

This policy puts forward the commitment of all organizing agencies to protect children and young people through its programme interventions as well as through its organizational policy to protect the children and young people with whom it comes into contact related to preparation and meeting/consultation.

This Child Protection Policy is supported by clear guidelines on how it needs to be implemented by organizations participating and supporting children and young people before and during such meeting/consultation.

Specific procedures and checklists will be issued that will be more specific in spelling out actions that are required before, during, and after the meeting/consultation that will assure adherence to the fullest compliance with the child protection policy.

This Policy deals with the protection of children and young people as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children.

This Child Protection Policy aims to protect children and young people from any form of exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect by individuals, institutions or processes which directly or indirectly harms or facilitates to harm children and young people or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. This Child Protection Policy protects children and young people by preventing:

- *Hitting or otherwise physically assaulting or physically abusing children and/or young people*
- *Developing or forcing sexual relationships with children and/or young people*
- *Engaging in verbal aggression including threats*
- *Robbery or destruction of personal property*
- *Developing or forcing relationships with children and/or young people which could in any way be deemed exploitative and abusive*
- *Acting in ways that may be abusive or may place a child and/or adolescent at risk of abuse*
- *Employing children and young people*
- *Any disclosure of confidential personal information about a child or adolescent*
- *Putting children and young people in harmful or potentially harmful situations*
- *Ensuring the right to confidentiality in the media*
- *Exposure to pornographic materials in electronic or any other form*

Our understanding of child abuse and exploitation includes, but is not limited to:

Emotional Abuse: *The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's feeling. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. (Source: Lambeth College, September 2004)*

Neglect: *The persistent failure or ignorance towards child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs in different situations. Neglect or negligent treatment includes the failure to properly or timely supervise, care and safeguard children from any possible danger or harm, those are likely to impairment or cause some level of distress within or among children, young people and adults. (Source: Child Protection Policy, SOS Children's Villages, May 2008)*

Physical injury: Actual or likely physical injury to any child or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. (Tdh- CPP 2000)

It also means injuries that take place upon a child physically due to neglect, abuse or violence.

Physical Abuse: It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen's syndrome by proxy'. (Source: Lambeth College, September 2004)

Child Pornography: Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or representation of the sexual parts of a child, the dominant characteristic of which is depiction for a sexual purpose. (Source: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.)

It can include photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes and computer disks or files. Generally speaking there are two categories of pornography: soft core which is not sexually explicit but involves naked and seductive images of children and hard core which relates to images of children engaged in sexual activity and use of children in the production of pornography is sexual exploitation. (Source: ECPAT)

Sexual Abuse: It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. (Source: Child Protection Policy, SOS Children's Villages, May 2008)

Child Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse of children can be defined as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (a stranger, sibling or person in a position of authority, such as a parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an older child's or adult's sexual desires. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional. (Source: Definitions of Child Sexual Exploitation and Related Terms. NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Commercial sexual exploitation of children consists of practices that are demeaning, degrading and often life threatening to children. There are three primary and interrelated forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children: prostitution, pornography, and trafficking for sexual purposes. Other forms of sexual exploitation of children include child sex tourism, child marriages and forced marriages. (Source: Questions and Answers about the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. ECPAT International, Thailand, 2001)

Discrimination: Biased or prejudiced in favor of, or against the children.

Violence: Physical, psychological (psychosocial), and sexual violence to children through abuse, neglect or exploitation, as acts of commission or omission in direct or indirect forms, that endanger or harm the child's dignity, physical, psychological, or social status, or development. (Source: [The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence, 2005](#))

Rehabilitation and integration: Raising concerns and reporting suspicions, allegations, disclosures and witnessing of child abuse where appropriate, to relevant competent authorities. – Knowing beforehand, what steps to take and whom to contact, in the event of child protection concerns. – Protecting and supporting children, employees and others¹³ experiencing child abuse through psychological, medical and legal means where necessary. ([Terre des hommes – Child Protection Policy 2000](#))

Raising and reporting concerns

Any person working or coming into contact with children, supporting or attending an event has a responsibility to raise and report concerns on the safety or welfare of children. Employees and others should report concerns directly to their line manager and / or the Human Resources Manager to the Raising Concerns. ([Terre des hommes – Child Protection Policy 2000](#))

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Awareness

For effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy, it needs to be understood accurately by all. All organizations should brief their participants about this policy, and document that this briefing has taken place and is understood by attendees.

Prevention

As a preventative measure, children and young people rights to protection will be safeguarded at all times through appropriate management practices, which includes policies and procedures for recruitment of staff and the selection of all participants. Organizations should ensure proper consideration in assessing risk and its management which involves adequate supervision of children in the care of accompanying adults along with an appropriate guidelines regarding information technology (such as email, mobile phones, internet).

CODE OF CONDUCT

All participants at the meeting/consultation must be aware of the Code of Conduct that will be available and explained in preparatory briefings of such meetings/consultations.

Reporting

Clear steps and guidelines on reporting incidences violating the Ethical Code of Conduct will be established as well as actions to be taken. Quick and transparent measures are ensured which also take local legal responsibilities into account.

Responding

All delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel attending the meeting/consultation will ensure that positive action is taken to support and protect children and young people where concerns arise. All participants must take seriously any concerns raised and will support children and young people, staff or adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns. All participants will act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent investigation. All responses will be guided by the principle of 'best interests of the child'.

Disciplinary Actions

Non-compliance with the above shall be taken seriously. This will involve a thorough investigation and referral of cases to the police and/or social services if national or international child rights laws have been violated.

Legal Actions

The breach of certain provisions of this guidelines may also be reported and prosecuted as per the prevailing laws.

Monitoring

All delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel are responsible for ensuring that the actions of attendees conform to this policy in safeguarding children and young people and that they have methods of monitoring and evaluation to ensure this is taking place at all times.