

# **SAFE- GUARDING POLICY**



<b>Title</b>	<b>Terre des Hommes Netherlands Safeguarding Policy</b> This Safeguarding Policy sets out TdH NL’s commitment to keep all people associated with the work of TdH NL safe; to respond and prevent abuse, harm, misconduct and negative outcomes of programmes; and to actively respond when concerns are raised or incidents are reported.
<b>Target group</b>	TdH NL Board members, Executive Team, staff, volunteers, consultants, trainees, partners, suppliers and all other stakeholders including children and young people associated with TdH NL or partner programmes.
<b>Policy owner</b>	TdH NL Managing Director (MD)
<b>Delegated to</b>	TdH NL Integrity & Compliance (I&C) Manager
<b>Approved by</b>	TdH NL Supervisory Board
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<b>Related documents</b>	This policy is part of TdH NL Integrity Framework: Global Code of Conduct (CoC), Reporting & Investigation Procedure, Speak Up! Manual
<b>This policy replaces</b>	TdH NL Child Safeguarding policy TdH NL Code of Conduct on Child Safeguarding
<b>Relevant legislation</b>	Relevant United Nations human rights conventions and European Union legislation are listed in sections below. The Policy should be adapted to include regional and national legal frameworks.
<b>Date review due</b>	March 2025

# **SAFE- GUARDING POLICY**

<b>A. Introduction and purpose</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>B. Definition of Safeguarding</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>C. Safeguarding Policy Statement</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>D. Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>E. Scope &amp; Target groups</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>F. Principles of Safeguarding</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>G. Safeguarding Commitments</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>H. Legislation underpinning the Policy</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>I. Related documents and resources</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>J. Definitions</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Signature</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Annex 1 - Specific Roles &amp; Responsibilities in Safeguarding</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Annex 2 - Safeguarding Principles Examples</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Annex 3 - Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children</b>	<b>25</b>

# A. Introduction and purpose

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an international non-governmental organisation that fights against child exploitation. It is the vision of TdH NL that children can flourish in a world free of all forms of exploitation. TdH NL's mission is to protect children by preventing and stopping child exploitation, and by empowering children to make their voices count.

We strongly believe that keeping children safe is the foundation of our work. In addition, TdH NL has a legal and moral duty to run activities with the utmost respect for the people with whom we work. For this reason, we require all staff, partners, volunteers and collaborators to adhere to the highest standards of behaviour at all times and in all places, based on humanitarian principles, international human rights frameworks and our organisation's values. TdH NL staff are ambassadors for children 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is non-negotiable.

## What is child exploitation?

TdH NL defines child exploitation as an individual, group or organisation taking advantage of an imbalance of power to get a child to engage in activities that are detrimental to the child's wellbeing and development, and from which the alleged perpetrator(s) and/or third party(ies) gain some advantage.

Preventing child exploitation and other forms of abuse is the core business of TdH NL, so it is essential that the people, projects, programmes and culture of the organisation reflects this.

[TdH NL's Listen Up! Strategy](#) 2023-2030 defines that the best interests of children are at the heart of every decision we make. The Safeguarding Policy is based on the TdH NL's Core commitments of Children at the Centre and Safety & Wellbeing. Child safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in our organisation. Above all else we abide by the principle of 'do no harm' in order to best serve the children we work for, the safety and wellbeing of our own staff and the people we work with and for is also important.

In order to ensure that the organisation meets the highest standards in ethical behaviour in our sector, we apply a comprehensive Integrity Framework based on international standards. The basis of the Integrity Framework is formed by the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy combined with a reporting system (Speak Up!) and procedure, overseen by the Integrity & Compliance (I&C) Team consisting of an Integrity & Compliance Manager, a Legal Officer and a Child Safeguarding Officer. This former Child Safeguarding policy now expands the commitment of TdH NL from keeping children safe in our programmes to a broader commitment to keep all stakeholders safe in our work. The Safeguarding Policy is dedicated to keeping all people who are associated with TdH NL safe, especially children and young people, but also communities where we work and our staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on TdH NL Draft Position Paper 'Defining child exploitation'

# B. Definition of safeguarding

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding refers to the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and adults at-risk nor expose them to abuse or exploitation. This term covers physical, emotional and sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse by staff and associated personnel, as well as safeguarding risks caused by programme design and implementation. It also covers harm caused to staff in the workplace<sup>2</sup>.

As child focused organisation working with children, TdH NL specifically focuses on Child Safeguarding which is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

TdH NL actively works on (Child) Safeguarding by preventing, reporting and responding to harm or violence against children and adults, committed by staff or persons involved in any other way in our organisation, through the implementation of the commitments in this Policy.

Safeguarding has a moral basis and a legal basis. TdH NL operates in many different countries and contexts, so while local laws and customs may differ, some overarching legal instruments inform this Policy<sup>3</sup>. Regional and national laws differ in each country where TdH NL operates, so the international and EU legislation provides a minimum standard. When there is an irregularity between these minimum legal standards and context-specific regional or national law regarding the application of the TdH NL Integrity Framework, the more stringent legislation will be applied.

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<sup>2</sup> Definition used by TdH International Federation, based on definition from the Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance

<sup>3</sup> See E. Legislation Underpinning Policy below for detail.

# C. Safeguarding Policy Statement

TdH NL is committed to keeping children and vulnerable individuals safe and does not accept any form of abuse in its programmes to children, young adults and adults. TdH NL is therefore committed to create and maintain an environment that prevents (sexual) exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) of children and adults, including our staff.

TdH NL believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. TdH NL will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding:

- Child Safeguarding
- Adult Safeguarding
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).

In this policy, safeguarding means that we actively take responsibility to:

1. **prevent abuse** (all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse or harassment, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation), and **misconduct**,
2. **prevent actual or potential harm** to people's health, survival, development or dignity,
3. **manage risks** affecting people and reduce unintentional negative outcomes of projects,
4. **report any concern** about safeguarding within 24 hours of being made aware of a concern. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action.
5. **respond** swiftly and comprehensively to reports of safeguarding concerns or incidents using a trauma-informed approach (see annex where concepts are explained).

Guidelines and other resources to help put this policy into practice are developed by various departments, programmes or Country Offices. Together these set out expectations of attitudes and behaviours that support a culture of integrity and safeguarding.

The aim of TdH NL's safeguarding mechanism as part of the integrity framework is to ensure the protection and well-being of all children<sup>4</sup> and adult beneficiaries, community members and staff<sup>5</sup>. Based on the principle of "do no harm", this system reaffirms TdH NL's zero tolerance approach towards any form of abuse. The integrity framework is aligned with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on quality and accountability<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Terre des Hommes Foundation's "Child Safeguarding Policy" (version 2.1) validated by the Bureau of the Foundation Board in 2015

<sup>5</sup> Terre des Hommes Foundation's "Policy on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse" (version 1.0) validated by the Board of Trustees in June 2018

<sup>6</sup> CHS, Commitments 3 (Communities and people affected by crises are not negatively affected by humanitarian action and are better prepared, more resilient and less vulnerable as a result of it.), 4 (Communities and people affected by crises know their rights, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.), 5 (Communities and people affected by crises have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to address their complaints.) and 8 (Communities and people affected by crises receive the assistance they need from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.)

# D. Roles & Responsibilities

First of all, it needs to be clear that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. It is the responsibility of every representative of TdH NL to prevent abuse, harm, misconduct as well as unintentional negative outcomes of our actions to anyone, in particular children and young people but also adults, staff and any other stakeholder in our projects.

**TdH NL Management** is responsible for implementation of the policy in the organisation worldwide. That means that TdH NL managers will make every effort to promote, create and maintain a safe organisational culture for all people who work for and with TdH NL, including our partners and the communities where TdH NL works. At all times, TdH NL managers will promote TdH NL's safeguarding principles and will create an environment where it is safe to speak up about any kind of exploitation, abuse or harassment.

TdH NL often works with partner organisations who are then working directly with children and adults in their projects. It is the responsibility of **TdH NL Partners** to uphold the TdH NL Safeguarding principles and commitments to ensure that children, young people and adults are kept safe in the TdH NL funded programmes. Similar to the TdH NL Code of Conduct, this Safeguarding Policy sets a minimum standard that both parties discuss during the partnership development. Having their own Safeguarding policy and measures in place is a requirement for partnership with TdH NL. It is the responsibility of TdH NL Country Offices and project managers to work with implementing partners to ensure that safeguarding is incorporated into project

proposals and planning from the start.

TdH NL commits to routine monitoring of safeguarding implementation internally and by partners on TdH NL programmes and activities. Depending on the context and project set-up, monitoring is the responsibility of the **MEAL Team and Regional Directors**.

The **Integrity & Compliance Manager** based at TdH NL has a key role to monitor that the Safeguarding Policy and related policy documents are implemented with support of the **Child Safeguarding Officer** and the **Integrity & Safeguarding focal points** who promote and train staff on the policy. Country Directors and Regional Directors are the focal points for Integrity and Safeguarding. The I&C team administers the reporting mechanism and coordinates case management. I&C has oversight on all safeguarding cases and investigations and reports every quarter to the Executive Team and the Supervisory Board. The I&C team is responsible for ensuring that this Safeguarding Policy is up-to-date and complies with sector standards. The policy will be updated at least every two years.

TdH NL commits to open communication about safeguarding implementation. The MD is responsible for the dissemination of the information and will provide a summary in the annual report. This includes the number of reports, status and outcome of investigations in general terms, feedback on actions taken including lessons learned.

Annex 1 gives an overview of the specific roles and responsibilities of staff, management and partners under this Safeguarding policy.

# E. Scope & Target groups

There are four groups who are expected to act in accordance with this Policy scope:

## 1. Staff and associates of TdH NL, specifically:

- i. Staff employed at The Hague Office
- ii. Staff employed at Regional and Country Offices
- iii. Seconded staff to and from TdH NL
- iv. Consultants, advisors and contracted individuals
- v. Volunteers and interns
- vi. Board members
- vii. TdH NL ambassadors

People contracted by TdH NL comply with the principles and reporting requirements specified in this Policy. TdH NL staff are reminded of other obligations which may apply to them, including the TdH NL Code of Conduct and Speak Up! Manual.

## 2. TdH NL partners, specifically:

- i. Partner organisations implementing projects funded by TdH NL
- ii. Partner organisations participating in consortia led by TdH NL
- iii. Contractors and staff they contract who work on TdH NL projects (for example research consultants and their field workers)

Partners who have agreements in place with TdH NL are expected to act in accordance with the principles of this policy. Where applicable, they must also abide by their own relevant policies, and legal frameworks that relate to prevention of abuse, harm, misconduct or unintended negative outcomes of programmes.

In cases where TdH NL contracts partners, these partners are required to sign the Safeguarding Policy and are accountable for applying the principles of this Policy to staff and downstream partners engaged to perform TdH NL related work. Partners are required to report quarterly on routine safeguarding concerns handled.

## 3. External persons who visit or engage directly with children and youth during TdH NL-supported programming, specifically:

- iv. Visitors to TdH NL programme sites or offices (including government personnel, journalists and media personnel, parents or family of children enrolled in programmes, delivery persons, maintenance or other service providers)
- v. Stakeholders with whom children and young people meet (online and offline) for lobby and advocacy activities
- vi. Participants in forums and campaigns (online and offline)

External persons will not be required to sign the Policy, however, they are expected to act in accordance with the principles of this Policy. Visitors to project sites and offices are required to sign an access control register. They should be made aware of their responsibilities to do no harm to children and report any concerns to an Integrity & Safeguarding focal point. During visits, meetings, or online engagement with children and young people, a staff member must be present at all times. Staff must have the authority to intervene and stop activities if a breach occurs.

The Policy applies both during, and outside, normal working hours. Actions taken by TdH NL staff and related personnel outside of working hours that are seen to contradict this Policy will be seen as violation of this Policy.

## 4. Children and young people who participate in programmes supported by TdH NL:

- i. Children (under 18 years old)
- ii. Young people (15 to 25 years old)

Children and young people who participate in programmes supported by TdH NL also have a responsibility to act in line with this policy and contribute to the TdH supported environment where people are protected from abuse and harm.

Children and young people are supported and protected if they witness, report or experience abuse, harm, misconduct or negative outcomes of programmes. They have a designated Safeguarding Focal Person to whom they can safely speak up.



Child abuse is never a child's fault and adults are always accountable. The programmes and activities that children and young people participate in have plans in place to manage risks to their safety and wellbeing. Children and young people are taught and guided by staff, associates or partner staff to understand the conduct expected of them. Programmes that work directly with children have guidelines and staff with the skills to handle children or young people who harm others, to ensure their own and other's safety and wellbeing.

# F. Principles of Safeguarding

There are 5 principles that we apply to our projects, programmes and activities:

## Principle 1: We do no harm and always act in the child's best interests

- i. First, we do no harm and our primary consideration is of every child's best interests. The child's best interests is a substantive child right, a fundamental legal principle and a rule of procedure<sup>7</sup>. When decisions need to be made, the child's ultimate safety and well-being are the paramount concern.
- ii. We recognise that our work aiming to end child exploitation means that we have a high risk profile, because we work with vulnerable children and communities.
- iii. We promote inclusion and non-discrimination. We minimise the influence of bias and prejudice in our work, programming and interaction with children and young people.
- iv. We uphold the right of children to be heard and their right to participation in decisions and actions affecting them. Child participation should always be voluntary, safe and meaningful.

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See Annex 2 for Examples of how we include do no harm in our projects.

<sup>7</sup> See UN CRC General Comment no. 14 on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para 1)

## Principle 2: We have zero tolerance of all forms of abuse and exploitation

- i. We are ambassadors of children's and human rights.
- ii. Abuse, including all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse or harassment (including grooming), neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation (like child labour, forced marriage, trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation), is prohibited by law and this Policy requires that we speak up against it. This means that we never commit abuse or exploit vulnerable persons

like children and young people, staff or other community members.

- iii. We support people who speak up about abuse and exploitation (witnessed, reported or suspected).
- iv. When we witness or experience abuse or harm associated with TdH NL supported programmes or activities, we speak up. We understand how to report concerns to TdH NL management or the TdH NL I&C team by phone, email ([integrity@tdh.nl](mailto:integrity@tdh.nl)) or the TdH NL Speak Up! Platform (online or phone).
- v. TdH NL and partner organisations have trained, designated staff to respond to reports and manage cases appropriately. They commit to reporting alleged criminal acts to relevant law enforcement bodies for investigation.

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See Annex 2 for examples of abuse and exploitation that are not tolerated.

## Principle 3: We address power imbalances

- i. We commit to addressing power imbalances. We recognise that factors like age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, colour, health status, religion, socio-economic status, education, language, nationality or citizenship status, caste, and/or marital status among others, mean that some people are at a power advantage whilst others face intersecting and compounding disadvantages.
- ii. We prohibit abuse of power by staff, associates and partners. Those in positions of influence, power or authority, specifically managers at all levels, are responsible for building and maintaining a safe environment and a culture of equality and accountability.
- iii. We proactively address bias, stereotypes and power imbalances in our attitudes and behaviour, as well as in our organisational structure and practices.
- iv. We ensure that accountability mechanisms are in place, such as training and awareness raising for project participants, participation of children in decision making in the projects and access to feedback and reporting mechanisms.

## **Principle 4: It is the responsibility of staff and partners to manage risk and prevent harm**

- i. We encourage openness by being open and making sure people are listened to.
- ii. We assess risk and plan safe TdH NL-supported programmes and activities. We complete safeguarding risk assessment and mitigation planning before activities take place. We consult the people involved in our programmes and activities on their views of risk factors, protection factors and solutions for prevention, responding and reporting.
- iii. Children and young people, TdH NL staff, partners and external persons who engage with children as part of TdH NL-supported activities and programmes are aware of who the designated project Safeguarding focal person is (often partner staff) and understand how to speak up if they need to report safeguarding concerns.
- iv. Staff and partners have the responsibility to speak up and report safeguarding concerns. Failing to do so is considered misconduct, and a safeguarding breach. Managers encourage speaking out and reporting of concerns, including by asking questions about safeguarding during regular bilateral meetings.
- v. Any person who witnesses, reports or experiences abuse, harm, misconduct or negative outcomes of programmes is supported and protected.
- vi. We brief participants on the safeguarding standards, getting their commitment to abide by the standards and obligation to report in case of any breaches of the standards or harm to a child or other persons in the course of the TdH NL activities.

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See Annex 2 for examples of how staff and partners can prevent harm.

## **Principle 5: The needs of those who have been victimised are at the heart of our responses**

- i. We always treat people, especially those who have been abused or harmed, with dignity and respect.
- ii. We listen. We listen when people, especially

those who are in a vulnerable or less powerful position, raise concerns. We recognise that it is difficult to witness or experience harm, and that it takes courage to speak up. We support and protect people who report, witness or experience abuse, harm, misconduct or negative outcomes of programmes, projects and all the other initiatives of TdH NL.

- iii. We take steps immediately to ensure the protection of the child or an adult who is the subject of the concern or any other person where there is an urgent risk to their safety or wellbeing.
- iv. We entrust project Safeguarding focal persons to use a trauma-informed approach when responding to safeguarding reports. They are able to recognise the signs and understand the effects of trauma, respond swiftly and appropriately and resist re-traumatization. They involve the victim/survivor in decision making, provide comprehensive information and consider their needs for recovery.
- v. We provide victim support. Every TdH NL Country office develops an up-to-date overview of agencies that can offer support to survivors, including but not limited to psycho-social and medical assistance. That support should be offered to alleged survivors, even before an allegation has been substantiated. The Country Office should also have a clear understanding of the local legal system and the local child protection system, outline (1) which safeguarding situations constitute a crime in the country, (2) whether there is an obligation to report safeguarding situations, and (3) who must be informed when and in what way.
- vi. We respect confidentiality and protect personal data. According to the TdH NL Privacy Policy, we treat personal information confidentially. Personal data is kept in a password secured case management system and only accessible to case handlers. Staff engaged in case handling and investigations sign a confidentiality agreement.

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See Annex 2 for examples of a trauma-informed approach that prioritises victims/survivors.

# G. Safeguarding Commitments

It is important for everyone who represents or participates in the work of TdH NL to be safe and respected. To implement this Policy, TdH NL and partners are responsible to ensure the following seven safeguarding commitments:

1. Safe recruitment standards
2. Safeguarding is part of partner due diligence processes
3. Regular training and awareness-raising activities
4. Safeguarding risk assessment and risk management
5. Safe mechanism to speak up and report
6. Trusted response procedure
7. Media and communications are safe

**(1) Safe recruitment standards are implemented** when engaging new staff and associates in line with the TdH IF Child Safeguarding Standards for Safe Recruitment (see Guidelines). TdH NL will seek to employ staff who are aligned with our vision, mission, values and this Policy. Managers and Human Resource staff are responsible to implement robust recruitment screening processes for all staff, particularly those who will have direct or indirect contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. TdH NL is a member of the IASC Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS).

The TdH NL Human Resources team at NL and Regional Offices is accountable for implementing safe recruitment standards, except in cases where associates like consultants, volunteers or supervisory board members are recruited. In these cases the line manager is accountable. Safe recruitment standards include the following steps:

- All advertising of opportunities includes a note on safeguarding and non-discrimination.
- Application documents are screened.
- Background checking is completed. Reference checks include safeguarding questions. Valid and recent (under 3 months old) police clearance is obtained and filed.
- Safeguarding questions are included in

interviews.

- Safeguarding commitments are included in contracts.
- The Code of Conduct that includes rules on Safeguarding is signed by all staff.
- Safeguarding and Code of Conduct is included in induction and performance management.

**(2) Safeguarding is part of due diligence processes when engaging partners.** Country Director and Programme Management is accountable for ensuring that safe partnerships are entered into. If it is determined that partner organisations require capacity strengthening with safeguarding practice, training may be supported by TdH NL. Project line management is responsible for ensuring that:

- Safeguarding is included in the Terms of Reference.
- Safeguarding policy and practice are discussed and assessed during implementing partner capacity assessment (using PCAT). If safeguarding policy or practice within partner organisations requires development or capacity-strengthening, this is included in project planning and contracting.
- Partnerships should not be entered into with partners who cannot demonstrate commitment and capacity to keep people safe and do no harm.
- Safeguarding commitments from partners are included in contracts.
- Compliance with Safeguarding commitments is part of monitoring and reporting to TdH NL by the partner.
- Partners sign the TdH NL Safeguarding Policy.
- Partners are responsible for applying the principles of this Policy to staff and downstream partners engaged to perform TdH NL-related work. Additionally partners must also abide by their own relevant policies and legal frameworks that relate to prevention of abuse, harm, misconduct or unintended negative outcomes of programmes.
- Breaches of this Policy can lead to termination of contractual agreements.

### **(3) Training and awareness-raising activities**

**on safeguarding are implemented regularly.** The global Child Safeguarding Officer is accountable for providing Child Safeguarding training resources for use and adaptation to different contexts where TdH NL works. It is the responsibility of each Country Director to ensure that training is adapted and appropriate for the context where programmes are operating. Human Resources is accountable for ensuring induction training is completed by new staff and associates. Thereafter managers are responsible for ensuring that their teams are up to date with training. Line managers, Human Resources and partners all have responsibilities to ensure staff and associates, children and communities learn to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.

It is the responsibility of project design teams to ensure these activities are included in programme design to inform children on TdH NL Safeguarding commitments and CoC:

- Training is tailored to the needs and knowledge level of the target group, including children and communities. The principles of the Policy are translated into child-friendly training and information delivered in local languages.
- Children and young people who participate in programmes or activities all receive Safeguarding induction training when joining. Ongoing programmes provide biannual refresher training on recognising and reporting abuse, harm or misconduct.
- The Code of Conduct and essential information for safeguarding is displayed visually at every office and project site.

### **(4) Safeguarding risk assessment and**

**management is routine** throughout all phases of the development, implementation and closeout of all activities, projects, programmes and campaigns. This is done to identify areas of safeguarding risks and document steps that have to be taken to remove or reduce those risks. TdH NL provides capacity strengthening, review and advice on safeguarding risk assessment and management plans, through the Child Safeguarding Officer and the REI team at the Programmes Department.

Line management and implementing partners are accountable for assessing safeguarding risk and

implementation of risk mitigation measures:

- The safeguarding risk assessment and management plan (CSRA) (see Guidelines and work instructions) is completed at proposal phase when designing projects and programmes. Teams (including relevant partners) are responsible for completing the CSRA and line management is responsible for approving it.
- Some activities that may require a dedicated assessment of risk and management planning include:
  - Child and youth participation in meetings, events and travel activities are guided by the Procedure for Safe Engagement of Children in Events, Guidelines (see Guidelines and work instructions)
  - Safe engagement online
  - Research and evaluation
  - Communication campaigns and the collection of communications materials
- Safeguarding risk assessment and management is revisited by TdH NL and Partners at Quarterly Review Meetings.

### **(5) Multiple options are available to speak up**

**and report safeguarding concerns** to everyone associated with TdH NL work, including children, young people and communities, staff, associates and partners in all countries. In every project:

- Children and young people are free to talk to the adult staff and associates whom they trust about safeguarding concerns or to report witnessed or first-hand incidents of abuse, harm or misconduct. Usually these are the partner (project) staff they spend most time with and know best.
- Named Safeguarding Focal Persons are available and known to children, communities and staff in every project and every programme and project setting. Children and communities who engage with TdH NL funded programmes and partner staff are aware that there are dedicated people that they may safely speak up to if they witness or experience any kind of abuse, actual or potential harm or misconduct.
- Children, young people and communities, staff, associates and partners in all countries may also raise concerns or report incidents directly to the I&C team through the Speak Up! Portal that

is available through the TdH NL website as well as through posters and other communication materials as well as through country specific telephone numbers.

- Managers in TdH NL lead by example and support reporting of safeguarding concerns.

**(6) Trusted response procedure.** It is the responsibility of the I&C team to convene committees to manage and investigate safeguarding concerns about TdH NL staff directly.

When abuse or misconduct is observed in a project implemented through a project partner of TdH NL, the reporting procedures of the project partner should be followed. The management of the partner should always inform TdH NL about the abuse and the steps that the partner has taken to deal with it. If for some reason, reporting to the management of the project partner is not possible, concerns can also directly be reported to TdH NL (country management or I&C team). It is the responsibility of partner organisations to convene safeguarding committees to manage and investigate safeguarding concerns internally. Where partners require support TdH NL staff will coordinate this with the Country Office or the I&C team.

When a case is reported to TdH NL, then:

- Cases are managed internally guided by Keeping Children Safe Management of Child Safeguarding Allegations (2020); Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance Guidelines for Investigations (2015) and TdH NL Child Protection Procedure (2019) and the TdH NL Reporting Procedure & Investigation Protocol.
- Representatives of TdH NL with specific safeguarding roles and responsibilities (such as committee members or investigators) are qualified and capable of responding to concerns and reports of safeguarding, using a trauma-informed approach. Qualified persons with these roles receive training, supervision and support.

- Any form of violation (or suspicion/suspect thereof) reported will be examined by TdH NL. Depending on the situation, it is then determined which measures are appropriate. The more serious the situation is, the more severe the measure to be taken. Violations of this Policy always have consequences. An example of an employment law consequence is dismissal, an example of a criminal consequence is a report to the police.
- Staff and partners are informed in the event of behaviour or programming incompatible with the Safeguarding Policy. The organisation also reserves the right of termination of the labour contract or other contracts.

### **(7) Media and communications are safe**

- a. TdH NL has principles and ethical guidance in place regarding the participation of children in research/media activity. See Annex 3 Principles for ethical reporting on children. This guidance is due to be reviewed in 2023.
- b. TdH NL ensures that media involving children is scrutinised well in advance of planned release.
- c. TdH NL prohibits the use of undercover investigations, especially where children could be involved.

# H. Legislation underpinning

This Policy is underpinned by the legal frameworks listed below. Regional legal frameworks in place are also recognised such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. National law may also vary. Therefore the legislation below is referred to by TdH NL as a Dutch organisation. The list may be adapted for each Country Office to include local legislation.

When irregularities occur between the above legislation and Dutch national law regarding the application of the Integrity Framework, including disciplinary measures for example, the more stringent is applied.

When irregularities occur between the above legislation and regional or national law where TdH NL operates regarding the application of the Integrity Framework, including legislation around ages of consent for sex for example, the more stringent is applied.

1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and optional protocols:
  - a. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OPSC)
  - b. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC-OPAC)
  - c. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the right of children deprived of their liberty to make complaints (OP3)
2. International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions:
  - a. Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
  - b. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
  - c. Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)
3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
  - a. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-OP)
  - b. Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict
  - c. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
4. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
  - a. Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106) complaints mechanism
5. UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (2006)
6. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
7. Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others
8. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000
9. International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
10. Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR)
11. European Convention on human rights (ECHR)
12. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
13. EU Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation
14. EU Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation
15. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (GDPR)

# I. Related documents and resources

## Guidelines and work instructions

[Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Management Plan](#) (CSRA) TdH NL

[Procedure for Safe Engagement of children and youth in TdH events](#) (2019) TdH NL

## Resources

[Child Safeguarding Standards for Safe Recruitment](#) (2019) TdH IF Working Group Child Safeguarding  
[Management of Child Safeguarding Allegations](#) (2020) Keeping Children Safe

## E-learning modules:

1. [TdH IF Introduction to Safeguarding](#) - all staff
2. [TdH IF Safe Recruitment](#) - for HR
3. [TdH IF Safe Communication](#) - for Communication



# J. Definitions

**Abuse** - The physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviours that frighten, intimidate, terrorise, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. It also includes abuse online and/or through mobile technology.

**Abuse of power** - The abuse of a position of influence, power or authority at the expense of others. It can consist of creating a climate of hostility or harassment, intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion. The abuse of power is an aggravating factor in discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment.

**Child** - A person below the age of 18, even if they have reached the age of majority under the law applicable to them.

**Child abuse** - The universal categories of child abuse (see The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child article 19) are defined as follows and act as a reference for local environments:

- Physical abuse: Actual or likely physical injury to any child or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering;
- Sexual abuse: Actual or threatened sexual violence towards a child including all forms of sexual activity such as rape, incest, sexual assault, sexual harassment and child sexual abuse material; Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, but also inappropriate acts or situations which are not understood by the child or for which they cannot legally give informed consent, or for which the child's development has not yet prepared them.
- Emotional abuse: Persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves emotional ill-treatment;
- Neglect: The failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger;
- Exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

**Child labour** - Work performed by children that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, affecting their health and

personal development, or that interferes with their schooling.

**Sexual exploitation** - Sexual exploitation means profiting or attempting to profit from someone in a position of vulnerability, unequal power or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to financial, social or political gain.

**Consent** - The act of giving one's free and informed consent. A child can never give consent for sexual acts.

**Discrimination** - Discrimination includes language or actions directly or indirectly intended to treat someone differently, less favourably or disparage them because of their origin; sex characteristic; age; language; social status; way of life; religious, gender, sexual orientation, philosophical or political beliefs or because of a physical, mental or psychological disability.

**Dignity** - Innate right to be valued and receive ethical treatment.

**Employee** - The person who works for Tdh NL, including paid and non-paid workers.

**Gender** - Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable.

**Harassment** - Under Dutch criminal law, harassment is a way for the perpetrator to make the victim give in and achieve what they want. In such cases, the offence of coercion (Art. 181 of the Criminal Code) could be used insofar as harassment makes it possible to hinder the victim's freedom to act and obliges them to act, not act or permit an act to be committed.

**Harm** - Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

**Inappropriate** - That which is not within the bounds of propriety and best practice. That which is indecent.

**Misconduct** - Unacceptable or improper behaviour by a member of staff. Breach of the Code of Conduct, values, policies and internal regulations, Dutch law, local law and external regulations in countries where

TdH NL operates.

**Other forms of abuse** - "Other forms of abuse" include bullying, coercion, harassment, limitations on the freedom to act, threats of serious harm or psychological pressure.

**Safeguarding** - The responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children and vulnerable adults, and that they do not expose them to the risk of harm and abuse.

**Sexual harassment** - Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

**Sexual relations** - Any act of a sexual nature, always with consent, otherwise it is abuse.

**Threats** - Words, statements, actions or behaviour intended to frighten or alarm a person.

**Trauma-informed approach** - Recognising the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledging the role trauma may play in an individual's life.

**Vulnerable person** - A person seen as an easy target for potential abuse or exploitation due to their gender, race, sexual orientation, sex characteristic, age, maturity, their social and economic environment and/or their physical or mental state.

**Whistleblower** - A person who makes a protected disclosure. The whistleblower is a reporting party. He/she is not an investigator or factfinder, nor does he/she determine the appropriate corrective and remedial action that may be warranted.

**Youth** - In line with UN definitions, TdH NL understands a 'young person' or 'youth' to include individuals aged 15 to 24 years old.

# Annex 1 - Specific Roles & Responsibilities in Safeguarding

<b>Establishment Date</b>	October 2017 (Child Safeguarding)
<b>Revision Date</b>	January 2023
<b>Responsible Department</b>	Integrity & Compliance

## **TdH NL staff**

Responsible for keeping all children and young people in TdH NL programmes and projects safe, as well as adults and colleagues. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff.

## **TdH NL management**

- Responsible for implementation of the Safeguarding policy.
- Promote, create and maintain a safe organisational culture for all people who work for and with TdH NL including partners and communities.
- Promote the Safeguarding principles and create an environment where it is safe to speak up.

## **TdH NL Project management**

- Ensuring that safeguarding risk assessment and implementation of risk management measures is routine throughout all project phases from start to finish.
- Responsible for ensuring that safe partnerships are entered into and partners that need capacity building on safeguarding receive it.
- Ensuring that safeguarding is part of partnership arrangements, starting with the partnership assessment up and to reporting and monitoring.

## **Project Partner of TdH NL Programme**

- To have a Child Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct in place and keep child safeguarding organisational procedures of the own organisation up to date.
- To report all (suspicions of) safeguarding incidents or breaches of the Code of Conduct in TdH NL funded programmes to TdH NL.
- To have a dedicated Child Safeguarding focal point in every project.

## **TdH NL Country Integrity & Safeguarding focal point** (Country Director)

- Responsible for promoting, training and implementing the Safeguarding policy on country level and on project level by partners.
- To ensure that the Country Office and the project partners are aware of the Safeguarding policy and processes.
- To recognise training needs within the Country Office or with project partners and ensure that everyone receives training on the issue of (child) safeguarding.
- To communicate incidents and violations of the policy immediately to the I&C team in line with the Speak Up! Manual and reporting procedure.
- To ensure that context analysis and other analysis are conducted proactively in order to give input to the protocol in case of incidents or violations and to be prepared in case of an incident or violation of the policy.
- To ensure that the Country Office has a clear understanding of the local legal system and child protection system, as well as provisions in place for victim support.
- The Country Integrity & Safeguarding focal point can be asked to become part of the investigation team and conduct fact finding research.
- Be part of the TdH NL internal Integrity & Safeguarding network coordinated by the TdH NL I&C team.

## **TdH NL Regional Director**

- To support the Country Offices to follow the Safeguarding policy and processes.
- To receive reports from the Country Director or directly from staff, partners or others. Report the case to the I&C team in the Speak Up! portal.
- To be part of a Case Committee organised by the I&C team when required.
- To communicate the final decision in (child) Safeguarding cases taken by the Management Team at NL level with the country Integrity & Safeguarding

ding focal point in the country of the case.

- Be part of the TdH NL internal Integrity & Safeguarding network as Integrity & Safeguarding focal point.

#### **TdH NL Integrity & Compliance Team** (I&C Manager, Legal Officer and Child Safeguarding Officer)

- Monitor overall implementation of the Safeguarding policy in the organisation, in cooperation with the Country and Regional Integrity & Safeguarding focal points.
- The Child Safeguarding Officer has particular responsibility for the promotion and training of the Child Safeguarding part of the Safeguarding policy, see JD. Receiving child safeguarding concerns, leading case management and if necessary, an investigation. Coordinate child safeguarding training for TdH NL staff at NL office.
- Raise awareness on (child) Safeguarding within the whole organisation.
- To give advice on Safeguarding to any member of staff, when required.
- To develop, review and update TdH NL Safeguarding policy.
- To ensure implementation of an Annual Safeguarding Action plan for TdH NL.
- To build and maintain the internal TdH NL Integrity & Safeguarding network.
- Ensure that training materials are available for Country Integrity & Safeguarding focal points to use to train (new) staff, managers and partners on a regular basis.
- Receive reports from anyone and coordinate case management in close collaboration with the Country Integrity & Safeguarding focal point. Ensure that actions are taken upon, cases closed and organisational lessons learned applied.
- To represent TdH NL in the Child Safeguarding Working Group led by the TdH Federation.

#### **TdH NL HR Management**

The TdH NL Human Resources teams (NL and Regional Offices) are responsible for implementing safe recruitment standards:

- All advertising of opportunities includes a note on safeguarding and non-discrimination.
- Application documents are screened and looked at through a safeguarding lens.
- Ensure background checking: Reference checks include safeguarding questions. Get police clearance.

- Safeguarding questions are included in interviews.
- Safeguarding commitments are included in contracts.
- Safeguarding Policy is signed and filed, along with the signed Code of Conduct.
- Safeguarding and Code of Conduct is included in induction and performance management.

#### **TdH NL Communications**

The TdH NL Communications and Marketing Team is responsible for ensuring that communication is safe:

- Any communication material that uses personal information and/or images of children and their families must comply with the relevant basic ethical principles and rules and have to follow the Safeguarding policy.
- principles and ethical guidance is followed regarding the participation of children in research/media activity.
- media involving children is scrutinised well in advance of planned release.

#### **TdH NL staff: Programme Officers, Technical Advisors, etc.**

- To be alert to signs of child abuse in projects during field visits. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and the safety of children in our projects should be part of every field visit. Pay special attention to behaviour of children, the relation between beneficiaries and adults, characteristics of the location/project, policies to protect children, attitudes and ideas of project staff about child rights and child safety etc. in order to judge on the safety of children in the projects.
- Whenever there are signs of a breach of the Safeguarding policy or Code of Conduct, the staff member should inform the Country Director, Regional Director or I&C team (through the Speak Up! Portal or email: [integrity@tdh.nl](mailto:integrity@tdh.nl)).
- A staff member can be part of the investigation team if this person has received the appropriate training.

# Annex 2 - Safeguarding Principles Examples

## Principle 1

Examples of how we **do no harm** include:

- Informing every decision and action with the paramount principles of do no harm and the child's **best interests**.
- Monitoring safeguarding risk management and concerns reported and making adjustments to programmes based on learning.
- Planning research, advocacy and fundraising activities that do not harm children's dignity or put them at risk of humiliation or stigmatisation. Those activities avoid stereotypes and instead empower children's voices. Specifically planning ahead with staff who know and work with children and young people to avoid retraumatization, and ensure after-care and follow up services in place if activities are upsetting for children.
- Protecting the identities and personal data of children who have witnessed, experienced or perpetrated a crime. That means that children who have been exploited are never identifiable in shared documents, datasets, reports, research or communications materials.
- Ensuring that partner organisations that provide trauma-informed residential care for orphans and other vulnerable children who are not under the custody of their biological parents and other placements (like internships and TVET training) are safe spaces for children and young people.

Examples of ways to promote inclusion include:

- Using inclusive and non-discriminatory language when talking to children; in all communications and in data collection tools (like surveys and focus groups).
- Providing activities and training that build understanding of cross-cutting issues like intersectionality, gender and inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Partnering with others who demonstrate inclusive and non-discriminatory attitudes.
- Plan and budget for reasonable accommodations for children with impairments that make it difficult for them to participate on an equal footing to their peers. This might include changing the location

of an activity so that children with mobility impairments can get there; adapting activities and information so that younger children, those who cannot read or children with intellectual impairments can follow and participate; providing activity materials and information in child-friendly easy-to-read formats or enlarging print; and providing assistance or allowing a child to be accompanied by someone to help them.

- Mapping and partnering with local referral organisations and providing referrals for children, young people and staff who need additional dedicated services- for example for people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, or people needing mental health services.

Examples of ways to children participate include:

- Providing time and space for children to lead discussions on activities and topics where they are the beneficiary of the project or programme and in decisions and actions affecting them.
- Organising at least two participatory sessions per year through which children can voice their opinion on the programme activities.
- Providing continuous feedback opportunities for children.
- Using child-friendly versions of reports, policies and programme information so children and young people understand the goals and activities they participate in taking into account their evolving capacities.
- Providing activities and training that build understanding of the cross-cutting issue of child participation and self-representation.
- Engaging children in planning and asking for their voluntary and informed assent to participate in research, communications and advocacy.

## Principle 2

Examples of abuse and exploitation that are not tolerated include:

- Corporal punishment by adults who supervise children or young people in programme activities. This is physical abuse.
- Bullying or cyber-bully by children, youth or staff. This is emotional abuse.

- Sexual advances, propositions, requests or comments by staff, associates or partners to children, youth or colleagues. This is sexual harassment. In some cases it could also be a form of sexual grooming, abuse or exploitation.
- Sexist, racist and any hate-based comments as well as any remarks that contribute to an unsafe and discriminatory environment for children, communities or staff.
- Communication or contact between staff/ associates and children through personal devices or social media accounts.
- Employment of children by staff, associates or partners to clean their houses and do domestic work in a manner that keeps the child from school and harms their development. This is child labour and a form of child exploitation.
- Withholding or otherwise denying access to somebody else's identity documents or passport. This is linked to trafficking in persons.

### Principle 3

Examples of how power balances are addressed include:

- Including the cross-cutting issue of gender and intersectionality in the design and activities of interventions.
- Taking children and young people seriously and listening to their opinions and concerns with patience, sincerity and kindness.
- Recognising that the children we serve are a diverse group and that many face specific barriers and vulnerabilities due to their specific identities.
- Ensuring that children and young people have a safe space and methods to participate and give feedback on the programmes and activities they participate in recognition of power imbalances between children and adults.
- Providing children, young people and staff with confidential reporting mechanisms that they can trust in recognition of the power imbalances between beneficiaries and service providers, seniors and subordinates.
- Planning interviews, photographs and video shoots with participating children and adults they trust, in recognition of the power imbalance between children and communications teams or journalists.
- Ensuring that the workforce is reflective of

diversity, and that qualified persons from marginalised groups are actively recruited, hired, promoted, including to management positions, and supported.

- Training to ensure a safe environment for all, free of (overt and implicit) sexism and racism, ensuring that the influence of bias and prejudice is minimised and mitigated.
- Encouraging staff to speak up and report when they notice discrimination, including sexist, ableist, racist, or transphobic comments or behaviours.
- Avoiding sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries or other vulnerable community members where we work in recognition of the power imbalance between NGO workers and target populations.

### Principle 4

Examples of how staff and partners can prevent harm include:

- Participating in a culture of openness and accountability and having the courage to speak up when there are safeguarding concerns.
- Thinking about potential risks at programme design phase, and throughout implementation, by including risk assessments and reviews of risk assessments, in addition to tracking and following up on safeguarding cases.
- Incorporating safeguarding concerns and feedback as a standard agenda item in project and human resources management, so that it is a topic that is actively and openly discussed.
- Making use of child-friendly communications materials about safeguarding and how to speak up including on posters in places where activities take place, through social media and through activities with children.

### Principle 5

Examples of a trauma-informed approach that prioritises victims/ survivors:

- When conducting research with children we ensure that before children sign assent they understand that data collectors have to share disclosures of abuse or concerns for childrens' safety with the Partner Safeguarding Focal Persons.

- When a child discloses that they have been abused or harmed, we believe them. We reassure them that child abuse is never the child's fault. We respect their privacy, but we never promise to keep secrets. We explain that we need to report it to people who can help.
- When a staff member speaks up, they are able to trust that they will not be victimised for 'blowing the whistle' and that it won't make the situation worse for them or others. Their concerns are always taken seriously (see [SpeakUp! procedure](#))
- Every TdH NL Manager, Partner Safeguarding Focal Persons or other staff involved in case management has the responsibility to protect the identities of those who speak up.
- Where possible, affected individuals are given the opportunity to play a significant role in planning and evaluating activities that they are part of in regards to the follow-up of the concern. Decisions are made with transparency and with the goal to build and maintain trust.
- We give clear and appropriate information about the process and rights of children and others that come to us with concerns.
- We avoid retraumatization of victims by approaching them with non-judgemental support and organise our systems in such a way that distressing experiences are shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and only with qualified persons required for providing services required.

# Annex 3 - Principles for ethical reporting on children

Reporting on children has its special challenges. In some instances the act of reporting on children places them or other children at risk of retribution or stigmatisation.

The guideline of TdH NL is based on the guidelines that UNICEF<sup>8</sup> has developed (with some small changes) to assist journalists, other media professionals but also corporate or private donors during their project visit as they all, in their own way, report on issues affecting children. These guidelines will especially help the media to cover children in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. The guidelines are meant to support the best intentions of ethical reporters: serving the public interest without compromising the rights of children.

N.B. Where in the principles and guidelines below 'reporter' is being used, it also applies to any other visitor that has no formal role as a reporting, e.g. a corporate sponsor.

## Principles

1. The dignity and rights of every child are to be respected in every circumstance. Children must never be presented as passive victims or submissive.
2. In interviewing and reporting on children, special attention is to be paid to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their opinions heard, to participate in decisions affecting them and to be protected from harm and retribution, including the potential of harm and retribution.
3. The best interests of each child are to be protected over any other consideration, including over advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights.
4. When trying to determine the best interests of a child, the child's right to have their views taken into account is to be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
5. Those closest to the child's situation and best

able to assess it are to be consulted about the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reportage.

6. Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.
7. Do not make promises to the child in return for anything (e.g. images or an interview)

## Guidelines for interviewing children

- Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.
- Do not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
- No staging: Do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.
- Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking with a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
- Obtain permission from the child, his/her parents or caretakers in close cooperation with the local project partner and accompanying Terre des Hommes Netherlands staff present for all interviews, videotaping and, for documentary photographs. When possible, this permission should be in writing (consent form). This always applies to individual photos and videos of children. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually only ensured if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.
- Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that



children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer. In film, video and radio interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story. Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

## Guidelines for reporting on children

1. Do not further stigmatize any child; avoid categorisations or descriptions that expose a child to negative reprisals - including additional physical or psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection by their local communities.
2. Always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image.
3. Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:
  - a. A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation;
  - b. A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse;
  - c. HIV positive, or living with AIDS, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives
  - d. fully informed consent;
  - e. Charged or convicted of a crime;
  - f. A current or former child combatant.
4. In certain circumstances of risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as an asylum seeker, a refugee or an internal displaced person.
5. In cases – as long as they are clearly explained to and approved by the child and his or her caretaker and only when comparable with the examples below – using a child's identity - their name and/or recognizable image - is in the child's best interests. However, when the child's identity is used, they must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals.

Some examples of these special cases are:

- When a child initiates contact with the reporter, wanting to exercise their right to freedom of expression and their right to have their opinion heard.
- When a child is part of a sustained programme of activism or social mobilisation and wants to be so

identified.

- When a child is engaged in a psychosocial programme and claiming their name and identity is part of their healthy development.
6. Protect the safety and privacy of children and their families by not using (location) identifiable images in the media or internet, or using them in any way which reveals their location. E.g.: don't include name, place and country and/or street name where the child lives/stays.
  7. Confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both.
  8. When in doubt about whether a child is at risk, report on the general situation for children rather than on an individual child, no matter how newsworthy the story.
  9. Ensure that images could not be interpreted as sexual or condone any other situation of abuse.
  10. The images and messages may only be used with the consent of TdH NL.

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