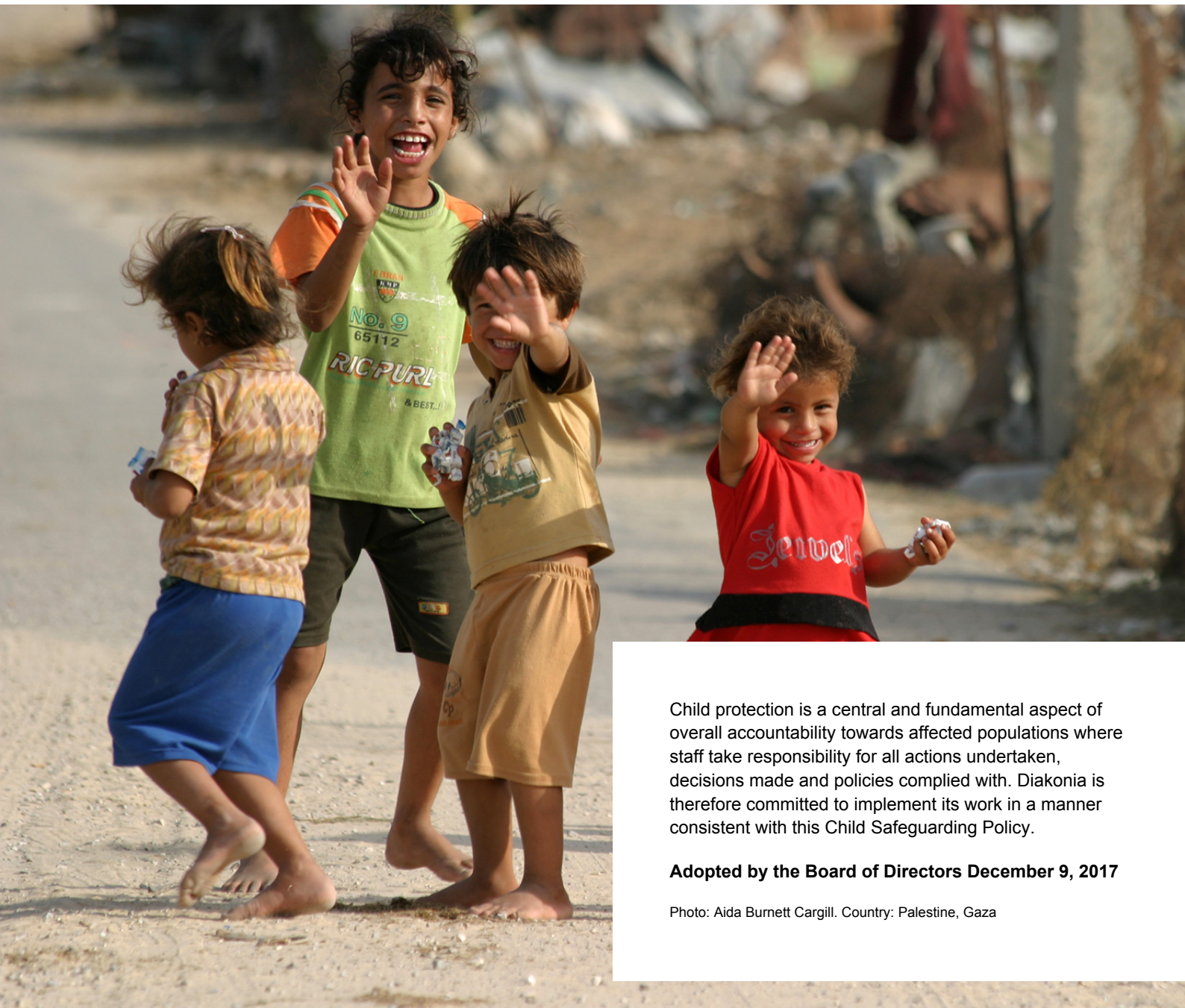


Child Safeguarding Policy



Child protection is a central and fundamental aspect of overall accountability towards affected populations where staff take responsibility for all actions undertaken, decisions made and policies complied with. Diakonia is therefore committed to implement its work in a manner consistent with this Child Safeguarding Policy.

Adopted by the Board of Directors December 9, 2017

Photo: Aida Burnett Cargill. Country: Palestine, Gaza

Content

Introduction.....	3
Principles	4
Key Definitions	5
Scope	5
Implementation.....	5
Risk assessment/risk mitigation	6
Safe Recruitment	6
Code of Conduct	6
Education/Training	6
Safe program design.....	7
Communications – use of images and children’s information	7
Social Media.....	8
Managements responsibilities	8
Reporting/Responding to concerns.....	8
Monitoring and review	9
Annex 1: Definitions	10
Reading list	14

Introduction

Diakonia is a Swedish faith-based development cooperation organization, also working with humanitarian action in certain settings. Diakonia is a member of the ACT Alliance. Diakonia focuses on six thematic areas:

- Democracy
- Human Rights
- Gender
- Social and Economic Justice
- Conflict and Justice
- Humanitarian response and Disaster Risk Reduction

Diakonia's target groups are very wide and children and youth are often one of the target groups and in some projects children are the primary target group. At an overall level children are often part of the indirect target groups where Diakonia supported programs and projects are implemented. The Rights-Based Approach is a cornerstone in Diakonia's work as is the Accountability Framework, building on the HAP certification and the Common Humanitarian Standard work that is done. In this context it is crucial for Diakonia to take into account the special care needed in contexts where children are present.

As stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), all children have the right to protection from all forms of violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse and exploitation.¹

However, children throughout the world living in any socio-economic context are at risk of abuse and exploitation. In emergency situations, when they become part of a displaced or traumatized population, there is an increased likelihood of abuse or neglect due to the widespread deprivation and distress. Many children suffer a double displacement - loss of community and loss of family - as they are separated from their parents or become orphaned. Such children are particularly susceptible to abuse or exploitation from strangers, family, friends or even distant relatives. Examples of this include sexual assault, harassment resulting in physical or psychological harm, exploitation of vulnerability, forced labor and human trafficking.

While most child abuse occurs within families and communities, children also experience abuse and exploitation within organizations intended to provide them with support and services.

Diakonia is dedicated to promoting children's rights and ensuring that their welfare and physical security are recognized, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards. Child protection is a central and fundamental aspect of overall accountability towards affected populations where staff take responsibility for all actions undertaken, decisions made and policies complied with. Diakonia is therefore committed to implement its work in a manner consistent with this Child Safeguarding Policy.

Diakonia commits itself to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core values and prevents abuse and sexual exploitation. Diakonia employees, board members, consultants and volunteers are expected to contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding and are also expected to uphold the dignity of those we serve by ensuring that the personal and professional conduct is of the highest standard at all times. Diakonia strongly condemns all kinds of abuse and sexual exploitation. Child abuse occurs when adults or other children hurt children under the age of 18, either physically or in some other way. Diakonia recognizes a child to be any person below the age of 18 years of age as established in the UNCRC.

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, articles 19, 34. Please also see the [Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse](#) from 2003

Principles

Diakonia applies the following principles in this Child Safeguarding Policy, drawn from International Standards for Keeping Children Safe and the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child:

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- Diakonia has a duty of care to children with whom we work, are in contact with, or who are affected by our work and operations.
- Diakonia has a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.
- All actions on child protection are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

Apart from these global UN sources Diakonia builds its understanding of the Child Safeguarding work on the work of the ACT Alliance. As member of ACT Alliance we refer to ACT Alliance's guiding documents for more specific instructions and references. Please see:

- **ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Policy²**
- **ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Guidance Document³** (where among others formats, the following can be found: Child Protection Risk Assessment, Child Safe Recruitment Checklist, Child Protection Incident Reporting Form, Training Resources and Toolkits)

Key Definitions

Child protection: In its widest sense, child protection is a term used to describe the actions that individuals, organizations, countries and communities take to protect children from acts of “harm” maltreatment (abuse) and exploitation e.g., domestic violence, exploitative child labor, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse, deliberate exposure to HIV infection, physical violence to name but a few. It can also be used as a broad term to describe the work that organizations undertake in particular communities, environments or programs that protect children from the risk of harm due to the situation in which they are living.

Child Safeguarding: Child safeguarding is the set of internal facing, business critical policies, procedures and practice that we employ to ensure that our organization itself is a child safe organization. This means we ensure that:

1. Anyone who represents our organization behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a member of our organization.
2. Everyone associated with the organization is aware of and responds appropriately to issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children.
3. We create a child-safe environment in all of our activities by always assessing and reducing potential risks to children.
4. We are driven by the duty of care that we have to children.

Staff: See Scope below.

A more comprehensive list of Child Safeguarding definitions and terms can be found in Annex I to this document.

² “ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Policy”, ACT Alliance, July 2015 (<http://actalliance.org/documents/child-safeguarding-policy/>)

³ “ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Guidance Document”, ACT Alliance, September 2015 (<http://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-child-safeguarding-guidance-document/>)

Scope

This Child Safeguarding Policy is valid for all Diakonia's staff at all levels (global, regional and country levels). Further it is valid for all persons contracted by Diakonia as consultants, short-term assignments, interns, photographers, journalists etc., as well as for those board-members, volunteers, activists, and invitees etc. that come in contact with Diakonia's partners, rights-holders and other people where Diakonia works and provides support.

The Child Safeguarding Policy shall guide all Diakonia's steering documents and guidelines in a way that will also make it relevant for partners and their work.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented through the following steps:

Risk assessment/risk mitigation

Diakonia recognize that there are a number of potential risks to children in our work, particularly in programs and projects where staff or others are in contact with children. To reduce risk of harm, Diakonia ensures that staff and others proactively assess and manage risks to children. Risks to children must be reduced or removed by all means within our control. Child protection will be taken into account in all relevant operations. Thorough and systematized child safeguarding risk assessments must be carried out, particularly in programs and projects where staff comes into direct contact with children. A risk assessment should always be conducted during program and project design, and it should be periodically reviewed during the life cycle of the project.

Child protection risk assessment is included as an integral part of strategy, program and project planning, using the same frequency and cycles.

Safe Recruitment

Diakonia has adopted recruitment guidelines to ensure that we get the best person for a specific position within the organization. Employing someone is a very important choice for the organization. It is also important that Diakonia takes all steps necessary to ensure that staff members who are employed are appropriately screened for any potential risks they might pose, not least for children. This can include special behavioral-based questions, checking references from former employers and it may also include a criminal background check, if possible. It can also include a special signed disclosure that a staff member has not been charged with child abuse or exploitation offences, especially if the staff member will work with children.

Code of Conduct

As a member of ACT Alliance Diakonia ensures that this Child Safeguarding Policy applies to our entire staff, and any other person who acts on Diakonia's behalf, including all persons contracted by Diakonia as consultants, short-term assignments, interns, photographers, journalists, board-members, volunteers, activists, and invitees etc. All have to sign Diakonia's Code of Conduct which guides them in knowing what is expected of them, but also to understand what kind of behavior needs to be reported. Diakonia will revise the current Code of Conduct during 2018 to ensure that Child Safeguarding commitments are included. Diakonia encourages staff to report on breaches of the Code of Conduct. The reports are always treated confidentially and investigated. Staff may report anonymously.

Education/Training

Education and training on the Child Safeguarding Policy must be ensured at all levels in the organization. Diakonia ensures that the Child Safeguarding Policy is part of the routines for introduction of new staff and that training of all staff is held at a regular basis. The training on the Child Safeguarding Policy is closely interlinked with the signature of and

training on the Code of Conduct (see separate section on Code of Conduct above). Diakonia ensures that the Child Safeguarding Policy will be included in relevant parts of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook (Program design, Risk Assessment, Complaints response mechanism, monitoring of partners, etc.). Training of partners will be carried out, and a particular focus will be on partners that work with programs and projects where staff comes into direct contact with children.

Safe program design

The Diakonia Accountability Framework is based on the principles of transparency, participation, non-discrimination and mutual accountability. Diakonia continuously work on these principles to strengthen internal systems, standards and practices to ensure that Diakonia is accountable towards the rights holders. In regards to Child Safeguarding it is of special importance that the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs and projects includes the genuine participation of girls and boys to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account. The Diakonia Handbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation stipulates all regulations and guidelines regarding the planning, implementation and follow-up of all programs and projects. To reduce and remove all risks for children throughout the program and project cycle Diakonia must ensure that these regulations and guidelines include child protection regulations and measures through the mainstreaming of Child Protection. In the analysis of the program and project design the risk assessment is essential since there can be inherent risks to children if there is an inadequate consideration of particular needs and vulnerabilities of children. The risk assessment should be periodically reviewed during the life cycle of the project (Please also see “Risk assessment/risk mitigation”).

Communications – use of images and children’s information

Children must be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner in all communications. Children should not be portrayed as weak, submissive isolated and/or vulnerable. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive. Diakonia must always analyze how images of children could be used, adapted and viewed to avoid that children are put at risk of any kind of exploitation. Inappropriate images of children should not be distributed or published. Diakonia must ensure that images are honest representations of the context and the facts and that children are portrayed as part of their community.

When taking pictures/filming a child in a portrait or individually or when an extensive reporting is made of a child, written or verbal consent shall be obtained from the child and from his/her parent or legal guardian prior to having his/her image and/or story distributed or published. Consent must also be obtained when taking pictures/filming groups of children. Ideally consent should be sought in advance of trip. The consent shall include general information about how and where the photograph or film will be used and be in a language known to and understood by the person giving consent. NOTE: Where photos/films that include children are taken spontaneously or unexpectedly, or where informed consent cannot reasonable be obtained, such as photographs/films footage of people escaping emergencies or of people taken from a distance, children should in these cases not be identifiable through the information accompanying the photo/film footage.

Diakonia ensures that images do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically. No identifying information of the child shall be used in the publication of images. Their location and recorded details are always stored confidentially.

Diakonia will ensure that there are minimum two adults present when working in the proximity of children.

Social Media

Details of children associated with Diakonia’s work shall not be posted on official or personal social media channels that could lead to their identification or the identification of their location (for example, geotagging of photographs should be disabled). Photographs, videos and other media used on social media shall conform to the Code of Conduct and to the section above on communication – use of images and children’s information as well as other relevant part of the Child Safeguarding policy.

Managements responsibilities

This policy has been approved by the Board of Directors of Diakonia. Each member of the Senior Management Team at Diakonia's head office has the responsibility to ensure that the policy is implemented in their areas of responsibilities and is reflected in all steering documents.

Reporting/Responding to concerns

Diakonia uses its existing Incident reporting/Complaints and Response Mechanism (CRM)-system as the main system for reporting and receiving any concerns regarding the abuse of a child. Reporting of incidents/complaints regarding Diakonia's work is made in and to our organization according to the CRM Policy. The policy describes how reporting shall be done and how it is handled by the organization, including flow-chart. The policy states that reporting shall be done on any suspicion, however big or small, that a child could be at any kind of risk or has been abused. The reporting system informs Diakonia to act on incidents and also to improve our work by helping us to discover shortcomings and reduce risks for incidents.

Diakonia's staff members, (including activists, consultants or anyone acting on behalf of Diakonia) shall report as soon as possible (ideally within 24 hours or as soon as possible) in case there are shortcomings in our work, and this includes particularly concerns regarding children in Diakonia's programs. However we also encourage others to report to us, such as for example partner organizations, rights holders in our programs - including children themselves, the donor community and supporters, the media and members of the public. Reporting can be made through various channels:

- In person (at all levels in the organization)
- To any of Diakonia's offices (via email, phone, letter, etc.)
- Through the Diakonia's web site where a form is available for incidents/complaints (whistleblowing), and can be used by anyone who wishes to report anonymously (<https://www.diakonia.se>, and look for information on how to submit a complaint)

The Complaints and Response Mechanism Focal Point at Head Office can give confidential support and advice in the reporting process. A member of Senior Management will decide regarding investigations of concerns or incidents. Assessment regarding the need to secure the situation for the child/their family shall be made and implemented quickly. Diakonia may use external expertise for the investigation. While noting that any investigation needs to be conducted thoroughly, in such a way as to best assess risks, all efforts should be made to complete investigations as soon as possible. If the incident constitutes criminal behavior, Management will immediately notify the Police and other authorities, such as relevant child welfare agencies. Contact details will vary based on the location of the incident. Management will make a decision on further actions based upon the analysis of the findings of the investigation. All information regarding reported concerns investigations etc. will be kept confidential and will only be discussed by a few designated people.

Monitoring and review

Diakonia will summarize the organizational learning from the handling of cases following this policy in annual reports without revealing any information about the details of the cases, and leaving out any personal information. The annual reports will focus on learning points and how Diakonia aims at improving the way of working.

This policy will be reviewed regularly. Critical lessons learnt and suggestions for improvement should be considered when updating the Policy, which will be done at a minimum every three years. The Human Resource Manager is responsible for updating the document.

Annex 1: Definitions

Bullying: Bullying is a term used for a multifaceted form of mistreatment, mostly seen in schools and the workplace. It is characterized by the repeated exposure of one person to physical and/or emotional aggression including teasing, name calling, mockery, threats, harassment, taunting, hazing, social exclusion or rumours.⁴ In the context of this policy, bullying would usually be child to child.

Child Abuse: Abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination, child labor and domestic violence. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by men or women, as well as by children and young people themselves.

Child labor: The term “child labor” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by:
 - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 - obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Child or young person: A child or young person is regarded to be any person under the age of 18 years, unless a nation’s laws recognize adulthood earlier. However, for the purposes of this policy, Diakonia will always consider a child to be anyone under the age of 18.

Child Pornography: In accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ‘child pornography’ means ‘any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.’

Child pornography material—Material that depicts a person, or is a representation of a person, who is, or appears to be, under 18 years of age and is engaged in, or appears to be engaged in, a sexual pose or sexual activity, or is in the presence of a person who is engaged in, or appears to be engaged in, a sexual pose or activity, and does this in a way that a reasonable person would regard as being, in all the circumstances, offensive.

Child protection: In its widest sense, child protection is a term used to describe the actions that individuals, organizations, countries and communities take to protect children from acts of “harm” maltreatment (abuse) and exploitation e.g., domestic violence, exploitative child labor, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse, deliberate exposure to HIV infection, physical violence to name but a few. It can also be used as a broad term to describe the work that organizations undertake in particular communities, environments or programs that protect children from the risk of harm due to the situation in which they are living.

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3. We create a child-safe environment in all of our activities by always assessing and reducing potential risks to children.
4. We are driven by the duty of care that we have to children.

⁴ World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/88/6/10-077123/en/>

Child-Safe Environment: A child-safe environment is one where active steps are taken to reduce risks of harm against, and there are clear, established guidelines and procedures for conduct, reporting abuse and follow-up.

Child Sexual exploitation: The abuse of a position of a child's vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another. Child prostitution and trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation are only two examples of this.

Child sex trafficking: The movement of children from one place to another, usually with the exchange of money, for the purpose of involving those children in commercial sex work or for other sexual exploitation, such as forced marriage.

Child sex tourism: Tourism, usually by individuals or groups from developed countries to poor or developing countries, for the specific purpose of accessing children in those countries for commercial sexual exploitation purposes.

Commercial or other exploitation: of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development (WHO, 1999). Children being recruited in to the army would also come under this category.

Discrimination: Discrimination includes the exclusion of, mistreatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability⁵.

Duty of Care: Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organization and individual to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organization and its individuals to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of or real injury.

Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, shaming, humiliation, or continual coldness from parent or caregiver, to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.

Gender Based Violence. The term "gender-based violence" refers to violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender. The United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defines it as "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately", in its General Recommendation. This does not mean that all acts of violence against a woman or a girl child are gender-based violence, or that all victims of gender-based violence are female.

Grooming: Refers to behavior that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. For example, an offender might build a relationship of trust with the child, their family or their community, and then seek to sexualize that relationship (for example by encouraging romantic feelings or exposing the child to sexual concepts through pornography). Grooming often involves normalizing their behavior to everyone, not only the child, and can also involve bestowing gifts, favors or money on the child, their family, and/or the community.

Internal concerns are those where persons covered by the policy are the alleged perpetrators. **External concerns** are abuses which would usually be considered criminal under local legislation, and perpetrated by persons not described in the scope of this policy. In situations where local legislation may be weaker than this policy and Code of Conduct, staff are obliged to abide by this Code of Conduct, keeping in mind at all times the best interests of the child.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide a child with clean water, food, shelter, emotional support or love, sanitation, supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

⁵ "ACT International Code of Conduct Policy For the prevention of misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, including sexual; and to ensure child safeguarding", ACT Alliance, October 2016 (<http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ACT-Code-of-Conduct-Policy-Oct-2016-E.pdf>)

Online grooming—The act of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient who the sender believes to be a child, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender.

Others: For the purposes of this policy, ‘others’ refers to volunteers, contractors, donors, representatives, media, and all individuals associated with any initiative funded or organized by Diakonia.

Physical abuse: Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take any form of physical treatment including but not limited to slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take any form including, but not limited to, bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Protection: Protection includes ensuring that individual basic human rights, welfare and physical security are recognised, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards.

Sexual abuse: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions (United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, 9 October 2003; Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse).⁶

Sexual 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, sexually or politically from the sexual exploitation of another ((United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, 9 October 2003; Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse).⁷

Staff: Staff refers to full time, part time, or casual persons working in Diakonia, and those engaged on short term contracts such as but not limited to: consultants, researchers, photographers etc. working in any Diakonia office or project location.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

Reading list

- “ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Policy”, ACT Alliance, July 2015 (<http://actalliance.org/documents/child-safeguarding-policy/>)
- “ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Guidance Document”, ACT Alliance, September 2015 (<http://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-child-safeguarding-guidance-document/>)
- “ACT International Code of Conduct Policy For the prevention of misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, including sexual; and to ensure child safeguarding”, ACT Alliance, October 2016 (<http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ACT-Code-of-Conduct-Policy-Oct-2016-E.pdf>)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, November 1989 (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>)
- “Prevention of bullying-related morbidity and mortality: a call for public health policies”, World Health Organization, Volume 88, number 6, June 2010, 403, <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/88/6/10-077123/en/>
- “Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse”, Secretary-General’s Bulletin, October 2003 (<http://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/405ac6614/secretary-generals-bulletin-special-measures-protection-sexual-exploitation.html>)