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ICDP CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO THE ORGANIZATION AND THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Introduction to the ICDP organization

Please read the attached document: “ICDP Organization”

Guiding principles for ICDP’S Child Protection Policy

- **The legal basis** – the UNCRC: ICDP’s Child Protection Policy is firmly based on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- It is the responsibility of any adult who has reasonable concerns/knowledge of child abuse to report it to social services/the police. ICDP expects all individuals and organisations to report suspected/known child abuse to the appropriate authorities in an appropriate and timely manner. In the majority of cases, child abuse should be reported as soon as an individual/organisation becomes aware of abuse
- **The moral basis – a non-negotiable duty:** ICDP believes that NGOs working for children’s rights have an absolute duty to protect children from abuse. *This duty is imperative and non-negotiable.* Without adequate standards and mechanisms of protection in place, an organisation is not only failing in its primary duty of care, but may also be negligently or recklessly fostering an environment of abuse. Any organisation that claims to be working for the benefit of children *must* make sure that it is not putting children at risk through lack of attention to Child Protection Policies and practice
- **An end to silence:** Silence breeds abuse of children. Those seeking to cause harm to children may seek out organisations with weak communication structures. Furthermore, without proper policies and explicit procedures in place, NGOs are extremely vulnerable to allegations of child abuse. ICDP therefore believes in:
 - Creating an environment within and between organisations where issues of child protection are discussed openly, understood between children and adults and awareness, policy and practice developed
 - Creating a framework to deal transparently, consistently and fairly with allegations concerning abuse
- **Children’s participation – a space and a voice:** The best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves. Creating a space where children feel able and willing to speak out about abuse empowers them to become actors in their own

protection. *Children will only benefit from this policy if they are aware of their rights and are given the proper environment in which to exercise them*

- **Taking it further:** Child protection is not just about reading and signing a piece of paper: the policy sets out guidelines and standards that must be put into practice
- **Capacity building:** ICDP understands the need for capacity building on issues of child protection and appreciates the constraints and conditions under which organisations operate; however ICDP strongly advocates the importance of an assigned Child Protection Officer receiving regular child protection training and keeping staff members informed of changes in legislation. ICDP is committed to undertaking such capacity building in partnership with others. See ICDP Child Protection Training Manual.
- **Challenging complacency:** Resistance to addressing child protection issues may come from lack of understanding of the nature of child abuse, lack of commitment to the organisation/programme, and a sense that child abuse happens elsewhere. Organisations should ask themselves: “If safety and well-being of children are not at the centre of the organisation’s programme/activities, then why not?” It is unacceptable that it sometimes takes an incident of abuse to shock some organisations into action. ICDP will challenge complacency as a matter of course
- **These principles underlie all of the standards set out in this document.**

Who is bound by the policy?

ICDP is involved in many areas, both nationally and internationally, in working for the rights of children through the implementation of the ICDP programme. Each organisation associated with the implementation of the ICDP programme is:

- Held accountable for good practice
- Informed about the need to put in practice a Child Protection Policy
- Asked to sign a Statement of Commitment (Section III) to the principles contained herein as a prerequisite for working with the ICDP programme.

Definitions of those involved in ICDP’s Child Protection Policy

ICDP Trustees, office staff and consultants, interns and volunteers involved with ICDP, whether paid or unpaid.

ALL THOSE WHO IMPLEMENT THE ICDP PROGRAMME

- An ICDP registered organisation working on behalf of children which has facilitators/trainers formed by and is spreading the ICDP programme

- A network working on behalf of children which has facilitators/trainers formed by and is spreading the ICDP programme
- A professional institution which has facilitators/trainers formed by and is spreading the ICDP programme
- An individual trained by ICDP as facilitator or trainer in the ICDP programme and is spreading the ICDP programme

Board members/trustees

- ICDP Trustees are bound to the principles and practice of the Child Protection Policy. There must be one or more trustees, with relevant expertise, nominated by the trustee board, taking responsibility for child protection.
- Each Trustee will be:
 - Required to obtain a Criminal Records disclosure check
 - Expected to sign ICDP's Statement of Commitment (Section III) and adhere to ICDP's Child Protection Policy
 - Expected to provide two contacts for referees who will be written to and can be verified by telephone
 - Relevant trustees are expected to attend child protection training and keep abreast of updates on changes in child protection legislation
 - The Child Protection Officer is responsible for informing trustees about child protection principles and practice as well as any relevant updates on changes in child protection legislation.
- A copy of ICDP's Child Protection Policy is included in Trustee Induction Pack which is presented to every trustee.

ICDP Staff

- ICDP staff, full and part-time, are bound to the principles and practice of the Child Protection Policy
- Direct lines of communication amongst the staff must be implemented and a Child Protection Officer assigned to be responsible for child protection issues
- Each staff member with direct or indirect contact with children will be:
 - Required to obtain a Criminal Records disclosure
 - Expected to sign ICDP's Statement of Commitment (Section III) and adhere to ICDP's Child Protection Policy
 - Expected to provide two contacts for referees who will be written to and can be verified by telephone

- The Child Protection Officer and relevant staff members are expected to attend child protection training and keep abreast of updates on changes in child protection legislation
- The Child Protection Officer is responsible for informing trustees, staff, interns and volunteers about child protection principles and practice as well as any relevant updates on changes in child protection legislation.
- A copy of ICDP's Child Protection Policy is included in ICDP's Staff Induction Pack which is presented to every new member of staff.

ICDP Consultants, facilitators and trainers

- Each individual consultant or organisation whose services include the ICDP programme, and which include direct or indirect contact with children, will be made aware of ICDP's Child Protection Policy by being issued a copy of the Policy
- If the type of work carried out involves **direct or indirect contact** with children, the following standards shall apply:
 - Each consultant will be:
 - Required to obtain a Criminal Records disclosure check
 - Expected to sign ICDP's Statement of Commitment (Section III) and adhere to ICDP's Child Protection Policy
 - Expected to provide two contacts for referees who will be written to and can be verified by telephone
 - Relevant consultants are expected to attend child protection training and keep abreast of updates on changes in child protection legislation
 - The Child Protection Officer is responsible for informing consultants about child protection principles and practice as well as any relevant updates on changes in child protection legislation.
- If the type of work carried out involves **no contact** with children (direct or indirect), and no access to information regarding children, (e.g. accountant, auditor), then no formal procedure is necessary.

ICDP national or international registered organisations and partner organizations:

Every ICDP organization and partner organization implementing the ICDP programme is bound to the guiding principles contained in this policy.

SECTION II: ICDP CHILD PROTECTION: DEVELOPING GOOD POLICY & PRACTICE

The following is a guideline on what should be considered for inclusion in an organisation's Child Protection Policy and for those reviewing their policies:

- Introduction to the organisation and relevant background information
- Guiding principles
- Who is bound by the policy
- Specific organisational child protection requirements:
- Personnel recruitment procedure
- Management structure
- Education and training
- Behaviour protocols
- Code of Conduct

This section sets out ICDP's own detailed requirements in the areas listed above. These requirements may be helpful as a guide for our partners developing/reviewing their own Child Protection Policies. Particularly important are the guidelines on behavioural protocols, the code of conduct, communication guidelines and reporting and reaction protocol. Whilst ICDP recognises resource limitations, these are a standard of practice to refer to.

ICDP Personnel Recruitment Procedure

There will be a thorough and standardised process within the organisation that applies to the recruitment of all trustees, employees and consultants, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long-term, having direct or indirect contact with children. The process shall include:

- A candidate specification that accompanies each job description, against which applicants are judged, to ensure that the best candidate for the job is selected, above and beyond child protection considerations
- A disclosure through the Criminal Records disclosure check (if geographical jurisdiction applies) or local equivalent. These police checks will be considered to be valid for three years, although repeat police checks should be requested before this time should suspicions arise.

- The requirement for each potential trustee, employee and consultant to read, understand and accept compliance with the organisation’s Child Protection Policy and practice as part of the terms and conditions of recruitment, including signing the Statement of Commitment (see Section III)
- The required minimum of two character references (excluding family members and those who have known the applicant personally for less than two years) who will be written to and can be verified by telephone
- A standardised interview process which includes:
 - One member of the recruitment panel to be the Child Protection Officer or to liaise with the designated Child Protection Officer
 - Specific questions at interview on child protection and the candidate’s commitment to, and respect for, Child Protection Policies and procedures as well as the candidate’s motivation for working with children (as appropriate to the role)
 - Attentiveness to anything suspicious in employment history (including gaps), and the use of references via telephone to clarify any areas of concern.

ICDP Management Structure

The management structure reflects the organisation’s core principles, upholding a professional approach toward child protection issues and demonstrating awareness of matters of abuse. The structure adopted in order to facilitate implementation of the Child Protection Policy and procedures includes:

- A designated Trustee responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. The Trustee should have sufficient knowledge, training and support to carry out the role. If there is no designated Trustee, the Chair of Trustees takes responsibility
- A designated Child Protection Officer responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. The Officer should have sufficient knowledge, training and support to carry out the role. At each appropriate level or setting in the organisation there should be a named person/s to whom people can talk about child protection matters
- Ongoing supervision, monitoring and support of individuals working directly with children, or with access to information on children, integrated into the regular schedule of the supervisor/line manager, with support as required from the Child Protection Officer
- Regular, formal staff evaluations including an opportunity to discuss child protection issues
- Regular internal and external project inspections to ensure objectivity and transparency. External monitoring and feedback is not only beneficial as a child protection measure, but

also as a way to constantly reevaluate the structures and efficiency of an organisation's programmes and projects as a whole

- Open lines of communication within the organisation where understanding abuse and listening and responding to concerns are the main priority. This creates an atmosphere of support and encouragement for reporting concerns, as child protection can be a difficult issue to confront
- Limiting the disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, to those employees, contractors, trustees, officers, interns and volunteers who need to know
- Trustees taking responsibility to assure themselves that the organisation's Child Protection Policy is being implemented and that policy and practice is reviewed at least every three years
- The responsibilities of the designated Child Protection Officer in an organisation to include:
 - Promoting an open, responsive and supportive attitude to child protection within the organisation
 - Promoting awareness and implementation of both policy and practice throughout the organisation
 - Monitoring implementation of the policy and reporting regularly to the organisation's trustees and management
 - Maintaining knowledge of best practice, child protection updates and statutory requirements
 - Developing child protection training and resources as required
 - Leading on the organisation's response to child protection concerns and allegations alongside relevant staff and trustees.

ICDP Education and Training

ICDP aims to encourage opportunities to question and learn about child protection issues. There are opportunities within the organisation, led by the Child Protection Officer, to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to safeguard children. These opportunities – for all trustees, employees and consultants, include:

- An induction process which includes: familiarisation with the Child Protection Policy and practice; opportunities to learn about child protection; and information and support on who to contact in the event of any concerns about child protection issues
- Child protection training as soon as possible (and at least within three months) of taking up their position if they are assigned the role of Child Protection Officer OR in-house training and updates from the assigned Child Protection Officer (unless the individual has had child protection training within the last twelve months)

- Those who will have direct contact with children either locally or internationally (e.g. through school or youth group contact; project visits) must be fully trained on the organisation’s behaviour protocols and guidelines and must be clear on who to contact in the event of any concerns
- Those who have access to information about children such as personal contact information, including their address, specific cases or incidents, or any other details of a child’s personal life, must be trained to fully understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information regarding children
- Where possible, limitations should be recognised and arrangements made to deliver the training in as accessible way as possible
- It is recognised that child protection training and the topic of child abuse are of a sensitive nature and may raise personal issues for staff. ICDP will endeavour to offer affected staff individual support, peer support from other members of staff, or referral to agencies with experience supporting survivors of child abuse
- A regular re-evaluation of training and policy procedures will be conducted, assuring a constant, up-to-date awareness of child protection issues within the organisation.

Behaviour Protocols

- The ICDP Code of Conduct supports the protection of children from abuse. It includes guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children, and also of children towards other children
- The Code of Conduct should be prominently displayed/easily accessible for all organisation representatives
- Representatives of ICDP should disseminate and promote copies of the Code of Conduct in all situations where the organisation is responsible for bringing children into contact with adults.

See separate document called: “ICDP Code of Conduct”

- The ICDP Code of Conduct should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration
- ICDP staff must make an attempt to understand the local norms around physical contact between children and adults

SECTION III: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The ICDP's Child Protection Policy

FOR INDIVIDUALS:

"I, _____ [name of individual], have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing Child Protection Policies and practice while working with ICDP.

FOR ORGANISATIONS:

"I, _____ [name of individual], on behalf of _____ [name of organisation], have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. _____ [name of organisation], agrees with the principles contained therein and accepts the importance of implementing Child Protection Policies and practice in its work while implementing the ICDP programme.

On the understanding that ICDP will offer support for this implementation, _____ [name of organisation], commits to: (* delete as applicable)

* submitting its existing Child Protection Policy to ICDP for assessment (or)

* developing its own Child Protection Policy for implementation while working with the ICDP programme.

_____ [name of organisation], is open to working with ICDP to explore the implications of this policy for its partners, and to work together to build mutual capacity to develop and implement Child Protection Policies and practice.

The designated contact person within ICDP, responsible for communication with ICDP on child protection issues is KARL PETER HUBBERTZ.

(Print name)

(Job title / role)

(Signature)

(Date)