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Child Protection Policy

Effective December 2017

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Cover photo: Hassanatu,13, sponsored by ActionAid, in Liberia. Credit: Greg Funnell/ActionAid

1. Executive Summary

This Policy has been developed after extensive reviews of ActionAid's previous Child Protection Policy (2008) by a number of people both internal to the Federation and an external consultant.

This policy is governed by the basic premise that ActionAid does not tolerate any form of child abuse or exploitation. Children who come into contact with ActionAid must be protected from deliberate or unintended actions that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury, discrimination and any other harm. In all actions concerning children, the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration with ActionAid being committed to the principles of the Convention of the Rights of Children 1989¹ and the Declaration of Human Rights 1948² both of which promote respect for the rights of children.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ActionAid has guidelines in place to ensure children are protected from deliberate or unintended actions that place them at risk or harm by any member of the Federation. This policy is applicable to all associated with ActionAid including all staff members, consultants, interns, volunteers, board members, representatives of partner agencies, donors, journalists and others who come in contact with children due to their association with ActionAid.

This Policy defines children as any person under the age of 18 years and child abuse according to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition as: 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power'.

This Policy defines clear roles and responsibilities with respect to child protection for all levels of staff in ActionAid including International Leadership and Country Directors, Line Managers, Human Resources and all ActionAid staff as well as for ActionAid Partners. It also suggests internal organisational measures regarding interaction with children in order to keep them safe from ActionAid staff members and organisational activities for key areas of work like Communications and Media, Information Technology, Child Sponsorship, Programming and Emergencies and Human Resources.

This Policy also provides reporting procedures for both internal allegations involving someone internal to ActionAid as well as for someone not employed by ActionAid. It also contains compliance and dispute resolution mechanisms along with consequences of breach of Policy.

This Policy document ends with annexures containing Definition and Recognising Child Abuse and a Permission Statement for use of information and images. It ends with an undertaking to be agreed and signed by staff or anyone engaging with ActionAid confirming that they have read, understood and accept *ActionAid's Child Protection Policy* and the relevant Appendices.

¹<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

²<https://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

2. Introduction

2.1. Policy Statement

ActionAid does not tolerate any form of child abuse or exploitation. Children who come into contact with ActionAid must be protected from deliberate or unintended actions that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury, discrimination and any other harm.

In all actions concerning children, the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration with ActionAid being committed to the principles of the Convention of the Rights of Children 1989³ and the Declaration of Human Rights 1948⁴ both of which promote respect for the rights of children.

2.2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of ActionAid’s Child Protection Policy is to ensure that ActionAid has guidelines in place to ensure children are protected from deliberate or unintended actions that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury, discrimination and any other harm by any member of the Federation.

This policy provides guidance and direction to all associated with ActionAid so that:

- ActionAid staff members and representatives understand issues of child protection; are aware of the problem of child abuse, violence against children and strive to prevent and/or report occurrences of child abuse in their work.
- Organisational risks and duty of care towards children are covered through implementing procedures to safeguard children through good practice.
- There are clear guidelines on reporting suspected child abuse and all forms of violence against children.
- There are clear consequences for a breach of the guidelines.

The scope of ActionAid’s Child Protection Policy (and any adaptations made to ensure legal compliance within an ActionAid country) applies to:

- All ActionAid staff members, whether full time, part time or engaged on fixed-term contracts (staff members must act in accordance with this policy in their professional lives and are encouraged to do the same in their personal lives).
- Consultants, interns, volunteers, board members, representatives of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups or organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship with ActionAid that involves any contact with children.
- Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who make contact with or communicate externally about children must be made aware that this Policy applies to them while visiting ActionAid programmes or offices.

3. Definitions

Word/term	Definition
Child	Any person under the age of 18 years ⁵
Child Abuse	Child Abuse is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as: ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.’ ⁶ The main categories of abuse are defined by WHO as physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional and psychological abuse; and neglect. See Appendix 1 for the full definitions.

³<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

⁴<https://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

⁵<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

⁶http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2006/9241594365_eng.pdf



Childrens Educational Institute, Sao Paulo, Brazil. PHOTO: Tiago Costa/ActionAid

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. International Leadership Team and Country Directors

- Be aware of the local and international laws applying to child protection and ensure all staff members are made aware of them.
- They should provide adequate support to ensure that children involved in ActionAid's program work are protected.
- To nominate a staff member who would act as a focal point for raising awareness of ActionAid's Child Protection Policy among staff members and partners.
- Create procedures for reporting of and investigating suspected cases of abuse and exploitation of children and ensuring they are in line with this policy and local laws.
- Ensure that the relevant disciplinary procedures are implemented for staff members who have violated the ActionAid's Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure all staff members are trained on the rights of the child and how to recognize child abuse and exploitation and what the appropriate action to take is.

4.2. Line Managers

- To report and record any incident of concern about child protection to the appropriate child protection agency.
- Ensure staff members who are in contact with children are aware of, and provide induction on ActionAid's Child Protection Policy, as well as ensure access to Child and Human Rights documents.
- Ensure that staff members are aware of procedures for reporting concerns and their responsibilities in reporting.
- Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought for any activity with a child and encourage parental participation in activities involving children where ever possible.
- Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought before gathering any interviews, images or footage of children. Ensure that the parent or guardian understands the purpose of this activity and how the images or footage will be used.
- Ensure that any content gathered is used responsibly without risk to the child.
- Ensure that children remain in their known environment and are never removed from their known environment.
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to eliminate risks to children.
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and ensure these are supervised appropriately.
- Be involved and available to the community in all work with children.
- Ensure that staff members are accountable for the welfare of children during ActionAid activities.
- Ensure that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour towards children by ActionAid or partner staff members does not go unchallenged.
- If a Funding Affiliate ensure ActionAid's Child Protection Policy is shared with the supporters and to get the policy signed and returned by the supporter prior to departure.
- Ensure ActionAid's Child Protection Policy is included as part of any partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ActionAid partners.

4.3. Human Resources

- Ensure ActionAid's Child Protection Policy for all staff is included in the offer letter to all new staff members and all ActionAid Board members.
- As part of the acceptance procedure, staff members will be asked to sign a declaration of the policy stating that they are aware of its existence and will abide/adhere to it. The declaration will be kept on the staff members file and may be referred to in legal proceedings if a staff member is found to be in breach of the policy.
- Ensure that roles and responsibilities regarding child protection are incorporated into job descriptions.
- Ask pertinent questions when requesting references for a new member of staff, particularly with regard to any dealings and work with children prior to joining ActionAid.
- Request references from bodies charged with child protection, if such exist, if the staff member will be required to spend a lot of time with children. Where local legal requirements for criminal record checks are in place they must be complied with.
- Should there be an instance of child abuse then HR would support the investigation and ensure that the necessary policies and procedures are adhered to.

4.4. All ActionAid Staff

All staff must:

- Be aware of the local and international laws protecting the rights and welfare of children.
- All staff must endeavour to promote the rights and welfare of children at all times; both in the work place and at home.
- Staff members should also raise awareness of child protection and ActionAid's Child Protection Policy to children, parents and communities they work with so they are able to report any form of child abuse.
- When children are involved in a program event e.g. during a workshop, conference or meeting, rally or campaign, educational trip etc. organising staff must ensure that children are in a safe and conducive environment and are protected from any kind of abuse.
- Should there be an instance of child abuse then HR would support the investigation and ensure that the necessary policies and procedures are adhered to.

In general it is inappropriate for staff members to:

- Spend unnecessary time alone with children.
- Take children home, particularly if they will be alone with the staff member. Unless they are acting to protect the child/children.
- Inappropriately use children to solicit support, financial or otherwise.
- Promote any form of child labour – exploitative or otherwise.
- Demonstrate or practice discriminatory attitude/approach/treatment towards the children with disabilities, children of indigenous backgrounds, children of sex workers and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Staff members must never:

- Act in ways that may be abusive (physically and emotionally) towards children.
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
- Develop any form of relationship with children who could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Place a child at risk of abuse or exploitation, or be aware of these and not do anything about it.
- Exploit their own position vis-à-vis the children by making them run errands, do domestic work or carry out other forms of economic exploitation.
- Make inappropriate referrals to the relevant state institutions responsible for protection of children and other organisations offering responsive services for child abuse.
- Disempower children – Staff should discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

Staff members must avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example they must never:

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative to children.
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home without others being present.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves (e.g. write letters on behalf of children).
- Condone or participate in conduct which is illegal, abusive or unsafe for children.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others (e.g. recruitment for fundraising activities, selective award of gifts).

4.5. ActionAid Partners

ActionAid partners should also follow ActionAid's Child Protection Policy and it must be included as part of the partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the partners.

ActionAid partners, by the nature of their work, interact with vulnerable communities and children and will therefore be aware of sensitive information concerning children. This information may be called upon as evidence in child protection investigations or to inform decision-making.

Concerns regarding staff members and/or partners must be reported immediately to the ActionAid representative who in turn will report them to the Country Director or the Secretary General (SG) for the Global Secretariat (GS)

- Whenever a Partner has concerns of abuse or exploitation, detailed notes of circumstances and dialogue must be included in records and kept confidential. These records may be used as evidence to save a child from abuse and exploitation.
- Concerns that are evidenced by impairment of health, physical injury, sexual exploitation, criminal activity or threats to children must be reported immediately to statutory child protection agencies or equivalent \ authorities.

5. Interaction with Children

ActionAid's Child Protection Policy focuses on internal organisational measures taken to keep children safe from ActionAid staff members and organisational activities with details below for key areas of work.

5.1. Communications and Media

It is not only in direct contact with children that ActionAid's duty of care towards children exists, but also in the process of gathering, aggregating and publishing any communications that could expose a child to risk. The basic principle is not to provide sufficient information e.g. family name, exact location, to allow the child to be identified and located by anyone with access to our communications materials. It is also necessary to be mindful of the 'jigsaw' effect where separate limited amounts of information can be aggregated to reveal direct identification and location e.g. the presence of an unnamed child in a photograph captioned with the mother's family name and separately a photo of the child captioned with her first name.

The following are practices that staff members must follow in the collection, storage and dissemination of communications material concerning children:

5.1.1 Gathering Content

- The child's best interests must always be the primary consideration.
- Ensure fully informed consent is sought from a parent or guardian before gathering any case studies, photos or video of children. Never photograph, video or interview a reluctant child, even with parental or guardian consent.
- ActionAid's GS has developed a template to seek consent from a parent or guardian (see Appendix 2). This template can be amended to fit all respective ActionAid countries context if needed/required.
- Never ask children to pose for images that put them at risk, physically or mentally, either at the time of gathering or in the images potential future use.
- The content gathering must always be a positive experience for the child, providing a potential for learning and enjoyment.
- Never gather content that could shame, humiliate or degrade the child or perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discrimination and exploitation.
- Children should never be depicted in erotic, seductive or provocative poses or context – even when illustrating child trafficking or sex work.
- Ensure that children are suitably dressed. Never take images of children with no clothing, appearing to be wearing no clothing or wearing transparent clothing. Do not take any such pictures with the intention of blurring naked areas or using props or photo manipulation to cover naked areas.
- Never use a child to promote the ActionAid brand, e.g. by taking an image of them holding up a banner of our logo – this doesn't apply to our logo being present in the background e.g. on a sign or a sticker on an item.
- When children are heads of household or already married before the age of 18, the child's fully informed consent must be obtained as well as consent sought from a guardian, if one exists or someone who has a clear responsibility towards the child, e.g. ActionAid partner or staff.
- Payment and/or gifts must not be given following content gathering as it can be confused with payment for information.

5.1.2. Aggregation and Storage

- For content that is not shared using StoriesHub please remove any embedded metadata attached to a case study, photograph or video that could lead to the child's full identity and location being discovered.
- As long as it does not expose a child to risk she/he must be known by her given name. If names need to be changed this should be made clear. A secure record of the actual name must be maintained, but never published.
- Change the name and obscure the identity of any child who is identified as:
 - A victim of sexual abuse, exploitation or abduction
 - A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse
 - Living with any illness, condition or identity that is known to attract social stigma – unless in carefully considered contexts the child and guardian are certain they want to provide these (e.g. in promoting the work of a centre for children of sex workers, or an orphanage)

- o Charged or convicted of a crime
- o A child combatant or former child combatant
- It is strongly recommended that all content concerning children is stored only on the StoriesHub, and NK (ActionAid's Child Sponsorship Database) to provide security and effective controls over access and correct levels of information and to ensure that these principles and practices are adhered to. Content not yet stored on StoriesHub and NK must be carefully stored on safe servers and access is limited to only authorised staff.
- Adequate safety measures must be put in place for transporting content from the field. Such security measures can include encryption of data; ensuring laptops have strong passwords etc.

5.1.3. Distribution and Publishing, including social media

- Never publish any story, image or video which could put a child, her/his family or community at risk, even if the child's identity is concealed. The informality of social media, especially personal social media accounts, can lead to potential risk. All measures should be taken to ensure that both official and personal social media use (by staff, partners, supporters, donors, journalists or anyone else associated with ActionAid) as well as all other forms of communication conforms to ActionAid's Child Protection Policy.
- Publications in any media must never include a child's full name, school or precise location that could lead to the identification of a child. Location should be kept broad e.g. northern Kenya.
- Do not publish pictures of school names in background or school badges on shirts, maps, etc, that could identify child and location.
- Check that fully informed consent consistent with section 5.1.1 has been gathered before publication of case studies, photos or videos using any channel or platform.
- Remove the GPS metadata that some cameras may record with images before using or uploading them to social media accounts (this happens automatically when you upload to StoriesHub), so that GPS co-ordinates of the image cannot be tracked. Switch off the GPS or location tracking settings used on social networking sites or adjust them to make sure that children's personal details (e.g. like address or location) are not revealed online. Information on removing GPS data from photos can be found here: <http://fieldguide.gizmodo.com/remove-location-data-from-your-photos-before-sharing-th-1593773810>
- Avoid unsupervised and unofficial Facebook (or other social media engagement) between supporters and sponsored children – ensure all communications (in both directions) come through national offices in the countries and markets.
- Consult legal opinion if a child is in anyway involved in any current or potential legal proceedings (e.g. a community dispute over land) in case publication puts the child at risk or prejudices the proceedings.
- If any staff members find any content published by ActionAid that contravenes the practices of this policy, the relevant line manager must be informed immediately.

5.2. Information Technology

Technological development has increased the possibilities for online exploitation of children through email, instant messaging and social network sites that provide opportunities for inappropriate contact with children to be developed.

All Countries/GS should have in place robust IT policies which enable the risk of such exploitation to be reduced and procedures in place to address any acts of inappropriate use of technology by ActionAid staff.

5.3. Child Sponsorship

- All staff members must take adequate time to explain to the child the meaning and purpose of any marketing activities in a manner that will facilitate self-confidence of the child's contribution to the development of his/her community. They must explain how the Child Sponsorship process works and how the child will benefit from the program.
- All staff members involved in child sponsorship activities (i.e. message collection, photo taking) shall endeavor to make it a positive experience for the child with a potential for learning and enjoyment.
- The consent of the child and parent/guardian must be taken in the form of parents/guardian's signature on the child profile form.



Cecilia collects food during the drought in Somaliland 2017 PHOTO: Alice Oldenburg

- Staff members must take time to explain to a child when their sponsor stops or withdraws out of the sponsorship programme or moves on to other funding and marketing products.
- Supporters and donors will be required to go through a background check in the Funding Affiliates where it is possible, should they wish to visit a sponsored child in an ActionAid country. The cost of this will be borne by the supporter.
- Supporters and donors will be required to read and sign ActionAid's Child Protection Policy when they visit a sponsored child. It will be the responsibility of the Funding Affiliate to inform and share this policy with the supporters and to get the policy signed and returned by the supporter prior to departure. A copy of the signed policy should be emailed to contact person in the ActionAid country being visited.
- Funding Affiliates should advise supporters against posting any photo or details of their child on any social media. This is for child protection and also to respect the children's privacy. This advice should be included in the Welcome pack for sponsors from the onset.
- The ActionAid country hosting the supporter or donor is not permitted to leave a child unattended with the supporter or donor.

- A supporter should go and visit the child and his or her family in a public place in front of other community people and ActionAid staff not the other way round i.e. the child should not be taken to the hotel or place where the supporter is staying during the supporter visit.
- A donor or supporter should always be accompanied by an ActionAid staff member while visiting the child.

5.4. Programming and Emergencies

5.4.1. ActionAid Programmes

ActionAid programmes should be focused on the big child protection issues that are external to the organisation (adoption, preventing separation, preventing recruitment to armed forces, child labour, early marriage etc.) and how to prevent/respond to these issues through appropriate programme or project design.

Children can be harmed as a result of poorly designed programmes/projects and related activities and staff members responsible for programme or project design and implementation must recognise this and commit to examining safeguarding risks and issues for children at all stages of the programme/project cycle.

5.4.2. ActionAid Emergency Response

Emergencies cover a wide range of events, from environmental disasters to politically driven, religious or ethnic conflict. Children are often at much greater risk of violence, abuse and exploitation during and after emergencies particularly due to their age and developmental stage.

During emergencies there is the increased risk of exploitation/abuse by staff members (i.e. from a sudden increase in recruitment of staff members from the community) and along with ActionAid's Child Protection Policy the following provisions during emergencies must apply to avoid this:

- Ensure that ActionAid's Child Protection Policy is in place, translated into a local language and communicated to and understood by all people connected with ActionAid during an emergency.
- The Emergency Programme Manager is responsible for identifying the relevant statutory authorities (such as the police and/or social services) within the country.
- Follow due recruitment & selection procedures during an emergency, focus on key child protection questions for roles that will be working directly with children.
- Carefully check offers of help and assistance (in terms of new staff and volunteers) and where it is not possible to check backgrounds do not allow these people to work alone with children.

5.5. Human Resources

5.5.1. Recruitment and Selection

ActionAid recognises that appropriate and stringent recruitment procedures can prevent people who may pose a risk to children from gaining employment and thus minimise the risks of child abuse being committed by a member of staff, volunteer or consultant. The following should be reflected in Recruitment and Selection Procedures of ActionAid Countries/GS:

- A clear Job Description and Person Specification for the role (staff, volunteer or consultant), which is properly assessed during selection.
- Two references for all staff members and volunteers, including their most recent employer (or school), to include the reason for leaving.
- Gaps in employment / education history should be explored at interview.
- Confirmation of identity.
- Local legal requirements for criminal record checks must be complied with.

A criminal record / police check is generally only necessary when a post requires unsupervised access to children as part of its normal duties. Therefore, wherever possible roles should be designed so they do not require this access.

5.5.2. Induction

At the beginning of each project, during induction of new staff members, all staff members should be given an induction related to Child Protection. This should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- All staff should be given a copy of the ActionAid's Child Protection Policy by the HR and asked to sign their agreement once they have read it. A session with Child Sponsorship staff should also be held to get them oriented on Child Sponsorship and the role in child protection.
- All staff should be informed of their responsibilities in ensuring Children's Rights are actively upheld. These rights can be found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁷

5.5.3. Training

Appropriate and adequate training and refresher courses must be planned and implemented for staff members and partners working directly with children and those line managing them in the following areas:

- Local laws relating to child labour, abuse, exploitation and trafficking
- Contact details and information of various government authorities and bodies working in this area
- Information on how to recognise child abuse
- Procedures on how to report child abuse

6. Reporting Procedures

6.1. Reporting procedure – allegation involving someone internal to ActionAid

An allegation of abuse of a child should be taken seriously at all times. Unless abuse has actually been proved to have occurred one must always refer to 'alleged abuse'. Staff members must follow these steps to report abuse:

- Your concerns should be recorded immediately and emailed directly to your Country Director or the Director of Finance and Operations for GS staff members and copied to your line manager within a maximum of 24 hours.
- Include date and time of conversation(s) and any incident(s) disclosed. Reports should be factual and as accurate as possible. Opinions and presumptions should be avoided but, where it is felt relevant or important to include these, they should be clearly indicated as such.
- The local child protection agency is responsible for child protection and as a matter of policy staff must refer an allegation of abuse to local child protection or law enforcement agencies.
- Some countries have mandatory reporting requirements where there is knowledge that an offence has been committed. This can include cases of child abuse and the required reporting requirements need to be followed.
- The child's parents or carers (unless they are the alleged abusers) should be informed of the allegation as well as any action(s) ensuring the child's safety. This would not apply if the statutory authorities (such as the police and/or social services) are already involved.
- ActionAid's internal policies and procedures will be used to deal with investigating alleged cases of child abuse by a staff member.

6.2. Reporting procedure – allegation involving someone not employed by ActionAid

- ActionAid is not a child protection agency and does not have the expertise to investigate or deal with allegations of child abuse.
- The responsibility of ActionAid is to take action to ensure the safety of the child by passing relevant information to the appropriate authorities or agencies.
- If the allegation involves a partner then an appropriate manager/contact within the partner organisation should be informed. See Section 7 regarding compliance.

⁷<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

6.3. Confidentiality

It is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality and therefore sharing of information, which could identify a child or an alleged perpetrator must be limited and purely on a 'need to know' basis. Names and identities are not to be disclosed outside the group designated as 'need to know'. Line managers need to be notified if their direct reports are designated as 'need to know'.

Confidentiality should not be promised to the persons reporting the abuse or the child as this cannot be guaranteed, for example, there may be requirements to report to statutory bodies.

7. Compliance and Dispute Resolution

Compliance of the ActionAid's Child Protection Policy lies firstly with Line Managers, staff members, and the HR Manager/HR Focal person; with the overall responsibility of ensuring full compliance lying with Country Directors and the Secretary General for the GS.

Breaches in the policy can lead to disciplinary action including possible dismissal. In case of any dispute, the interpretation of the Director of Finance and Operations will be final and binding.

All memorandum of understanding's (MoU's) with partner organisations or Consultancy Agreements should include this policy as an appendix when starting any long term project or when children will be involved. For partners / consultants breaches can lead to termination of contractual & partnership agreements.

Where relevant, the appropriate legal or other frameworks as per the national laws will be referred to.

8. Policy Adaption and Review

All ActionAid countries are to ensure that they align to this policy and their local labour laws regarding child protection. The review of this policy will be aligned with ActionAid's strategic period or earlier if necessary due to urgent demand or need, legislative changes or structural changes to the Federation. The reviewed document and any recommended changes are to be submitted to the International Leadership Team (ILT) for approval prior to going to the Federations Leadership Team (FLT) for final approval.

9. Appendix 1 – Definitions and Recognising Child Abuse

9.1. WHO's definitions/forms of Child Abuse Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child's health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim.

Emotional and psychological abuse

Emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child's physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment.

Neglect

Neglect includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or other family member to provide for the development and well-being of the child – where the parent is in a position to do so – in one or more of the following areas:

- health
- education
- emotional development
- nutrition
- shelter and safe living conditions

9.2. Recognising Abuse or Exploitation

Listed below are a number of indicators, however, they may vary by cultural and economic contexts. This is not exhaustive but is a guideline to help establish whether some form of child abuse or exploitation has taken place. These guidelines are published by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

Emotional signs of Abuse (to be looked at in comparison to behaviour based on the culture of the community)

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also depression/aggression/extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Indicators of possible Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given to them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have a reasonable explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse
- Infections and/or symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases

Indicators of possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning child abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbance, with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Infections and/or symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases



Shelter for Women and girls, Tanzania. PHOTO: Rachel Palmer/ActionAid

Indicators of possible Neglect

As poverty is often the cause of the following points, we need to look at it contextually and in comparison to the community average):

- Under nourishment and failure to grow
- Constant hunger, stealing or gorging food
- Untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care

10. Appendix 2 - Permission for use of information and images

ActionAid is conducting interviews in [LOCATION] to obtain photographs/video/interviews concerning [REASON].

The interviews, video and photographs taken may be used throughout the world on the ActionAid websites and shown elsewhere on the internet, distributed to newspapers and broadcasters throughout the world, used in publications, and incorporated into other materials relating to ActionAid's work.

Under ActionAid's Child Protection Policy we take the safety and security of your children/the community very seriously. We make every effort to prevent revealing information that could reveal the full location and identity of your child (e.g. by omitting family names) and precise location (e.g. by omitting village or school names).

While we prefer to take photographs/video of your children, if there is any significant reason why this may not be possible, please make this clear to us before photos/video are taken and we will ensure the identity of your child is hidden.

Please sign this form to confirm that you give permission for us to use any interview you have given and videos and photographs that you appear in for these purposes.

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Place: _____

11. Compliance to ActionAid's Child Protection Policy

By signing this document, I confirm that I have read, understood and accept ActionAid's Child Protection Policy and the relevant Appendices.

This means that I will comply with this Policy and am aware of the potential outcome if I do not:

- I understand that should ActionAid's Child Protection Policy demand a higher standard than the local laws then this Policy will prevail.
- I understand that failure to comply with any aspect of ActionAid's Child Protection Policy may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment and/or engagement.
- I am aware that ActionAid may choose or (and in some cases be obliged) to report to the relevant professional or government authorities any instances wherein the law has been or suspected to have been broken.

Your employment and/or engagement with ActionAid is conditional on you signing and therefore agreeing to ActionAid's Child Protection Policy and its contents.

NAME: _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

Please return this page to your Human Resources department once signed and dated.