



Child Protection Policy

Direction of Risks & Audits

Update September 2021

IP / 02





On 24 January 2018, Handicap International’s global movement became Humanity & Inclusion. The Federation, which runs projects in around sixty countries, is now working under the operating names of “Humanity & Inclusion”, “Handicap International” or “Atlas Logistique”.

Any document with the letterhead “Humanity & Inclusion” applies de facto to Atlas Logistique and Handicap International teams.



Child Protection Policy

Table des matières

1.	5
Introduction	5
1.1 Why this Child Protection Policy ?	5
1.2 Scope of application	5
2.	6
Definitions	6
2.1 Child	6
2.2 Child Abuse	6
2.3 Physical Abuse	6
2.4 Emotional Abuse	6
2.5 Sexual Abuse	6
2.6 Neglect	7
2.7 Child Labor	7
2.8 Participation of children to light duties	7
3.	8

Statement : Prevention of abuses	8
3.1 General Principles	8
3.2 Awareness	8
3.3 Prevention.....	9
4.....	10
Implementation & Procedures	10
4.1 Recruitment, selection, induction period	10
4.2 Whistleblowing alert in case of non - respect of the policy.....	10
4.3 Confidentiality.....	11
4.4 Procedures with partners.....	12
5.....	12
Monitoring / evaluation	12

1.

Introduction

1.1 Why this Child Protection Policy ?

It is the duty of Humanity & Inclusion (HI) to protect all children participating in or impacted by its activities. In its mandate, a special focus is placed on children with disabilities or in situations of extreme vulnerability (minorities, refugees), who **have the same rights** as other children. However, they may be more vulnerable because of the various forms of discrimination, abuse, neglect or isolation they are often subjected to. In many countries, they are not empowered or respected and have very few life prospects.

HI promotes the right of children with disabilities and children discriminated to develop their full potential, attend, have their say and take part in mainstream society. HI considers that children with disabilities have the right to protection and to live and prosper within their own family and community.

1.2 Scope of application

Everyone working with children has a basic duty of attention toward them. HI as an institution and all those working with HI must recognise the risks to children and assume responsibility for, assume responsibility for protecting them from abuse and exploitation, conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity at all times, and act in the best interests of the child at all times.

This policy aims at protecting children from any abuse or maltreatment committed intentionally or not towards them. It applies to HI as an institution as well as to any person collaborating with HI, and notably persons having signed a permanent or fixed-term employment contract with HI, family members accompanying international staff,; trustees, HI board members; interns; volunteers; guests on the premises or on programs; provider organizations and partner organizations. This policy applies to all situations, professional or otherwise, during and outside working hours. It is HI's responsibility to ensure that everyone is informed of the existence and content of this child protection policy. Broader child

protection issues arising outside the organization will be dealt with through HI's program and project activities.

This update of HI's Child Protection Policy was approved by the Directorate in September 2021.

2. Definitions

2.1 Child

A child is defined as a person below the age of 18.

2.2 Child Abuse

Child abuse is a general term covering all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment. Including: sexual abuse, neglect or 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.

2.3 Physical Abuse

It refers to an actual or alleged physical abuse, or failure to prevent physical abuse or suffering of a child.

2.4 Emotional Abuse

The notion of emotional abuse includes verbal abuse, any form of discrimination which includes racism, discrimination and psychological maltreatment. It refers to the actual or likely adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

2.5 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse refers to any physical intrusion of a sexual nature committed by force, coercion or unequal relationship, or the threat of such

intrusion.

2.6 Neglect

Neglect refers to any act of omission or failure to provide, whether deliberate or otherwise, that compromises the health, security and development of a child, with due consideration to context, resources and circumstances. It refers to the on-going incapacity to satisfy the basic physical and/or psychological needs of the child resulting in a high risk of serious physical and cognitive disorder.

2.7 Child Labor

Child labor is regulated by such instruments as the International Labor Organization's Minimum Age Convention (N° 138) which sets the following age - limits:

- The minimum age for admission to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, **shall not be less than 15 years**.
- The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health safety or moral of young persons, **shall not be less than 18 years**.
- This age-limit may be reduced to 16 years, on condition that the health, safety and morals of the young person concerned are fully protected and that young persons have received adequate specific instruction or vocational training.

In HI's Child Protection policy, child labour refers to the employment and work of children below the age of 15.

HI is extremely vigilant with regard to this age limit in order, amongst other things, to preserve children's access to schooling and vocational training. Furthermore, and with due regard to national legislation, HI is careful to employ people over the age of 18 and encourages all those working in collaboration with HI to do likewise. The non-respect of these rules can lead to managerial sanctions

2.8 Participation of children to light duties

This refers to children's participation in economic activity that does not negatively affect their health and development or interfere with their education. No economic activity is allowed for children under 12. (International Labor Organization, Convention 138).

3.

Statement : Prevention of abuses

3.1 General Principles

HI commits to a set of principles that derive from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation; Everyone has a responsibility to protect and support children and to always act in the best interests of the child.
- Organizations have a duty to protect the children they encounter when implementing their activities. They must take all necessary steps to provide the children with the care and support they need and contribute towards a protective environment.
- Children are actresses and actors in their own protection and development, which does not exempt parents and educators from their responsibilities.

HI is committed to the protection and promotion of children's rights and reaffirms its policy of zero tolerance of any form of child abuse. Our Code of Conduct sets for the "expected behaviors and practices constituting the organization's minimum standards and actions to never carry out and sanctionable".

↳ [See Code of Conduct: Integrity, Abuse Prevention and Protection of People](#)

HI encourages the creation of dedicated spaces where children on the programme can raise safeguarding issues.

3.2 Awareness

HI undertakes to raise the awareness of all those with whom it is in collaboration (see point 1 of this policy) and to ensure their understanding

of the principles and provisions of this policy, as well as of the whistleblowing and monitoring procedures in place. Awareness-raising will notably include:

Information for the above-mentioned persons on:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its optional protocols which constitute the frame of reference of our child protection policy. These texts can be consulted on HI's intranet.
- HI's guidelines on the use of social networks by its employees specifying in particular that the use of any images must be subject to the consent of the children, their families and communities, respecting their dignity concerned.

↳ See the *Social network policy: Guidelines for the use of social media by HI employees and volunteers*

- Strict prohibition of owning or consulting child pornographic material.

Specific awareness-raising of the following:

- Children with disabilities have the same rights as other children and must be treated with dignity, respect, sensitivity and equity.
- Gender-related vulnerabilities with regard to child protection.
- Community-based programs contribute to HI's commitments by helping to ensure that children with disabilities and also discriminated children have access to education, are not victims of forced labor and are given a voice

3.3 Prevention

During the implementation of HI's activities, evaluations of the risks covered by this policy will be conducted as required. A risk mitigation strategy including safeguarding measures has been developed and integrated into the implementation of activities involving or having an impact on children so that the risk for children is minimized and the commitment to "Do No Harm" is respected.

HI undertakes to include these safeguarding measures in its communication with its partners, with an emphasis on children with disabilities and children who face a lot of discrimination because of their

vulnerability. HI ensures that its partners incorporate the notion of "Do No Harm" in their interventions.

4. Implementation & Procedures

4.1 Recruitment, selection, induction period

Before starting work with HI, each candidate shall undertake a secured recruitment process and submit to background checks.

Anyone having signed a permanent or fixed-term employment contract with HI, accompanying family members, trustees, consultants, as well as interns, international volunteers and voluntary workers engaged by HI shall be informed of this child protection policy. HI's Code of Conduct also contains a clause concerning respect for children's right to be protected from abuse.

The employment contract contains a clause stipulating that all employees undertake to comply with this child protection policy.

4.2 Whistleblowing alert in case of non - respect of the policy

In the event that suspicion or denunciation of abuse or neglect are reported, the following procedure applies:

The person who was initially informed of the abuse must:

- directly inform the protection focal point at the location of assignment,
- or the [regional] program director or the country manager,
- or use the professional alert mechanism detailed on the HI internet and intranet sites.

If the abuse has been committed by a [Regional] Program Director / Country Manager, the person concerned shall:

- Either inform the Operations Division Director
- Or use the whistleblowing mechanism consultable on HI's internet and intranet sites.

If the accused person is an employee, he or she shall be immediately suspended until the allegations have been investigated and appropriate measures taken. In other cases, HI shall immediately prohibit access to its premises, materials and activities until the allegations have been investigated and appropriate measures taken. HI shall, if necessary, ask its partners to suspend or remove the person accused until the allegations have been investigated and appropriate measures taken.

Immediate attention will be given to the child and his/her family through direct care or through close follow-up referral to the service.

Disciplinary measures are taken against the HI employee in accordance with the gravity of the misconduct and applicable provisions, notably the law applicable to the contract and internal rules of procedure.

For the same reasons, HI will officially request the partner organization to take appropriate measures with the accused person.

In any case, should a member of its local or international staff be accused, HI shall not obstruct local legislation and shall take all necessary steps to ensure fair judicial proceedings.

Any false, malicious or contemptuous statements made against a person having signed a permanent or fixed- term contract with HI or against family members accompanying international staff, trustees, consultants, interns, voluntary workers or international volunteers, engaged by HI, shall be investigated and the appropriate measures taken, including disciplinary measures.

4.3 Confidentiality

In all matters relating to this policy, the obligation of confidentiality must be respected. Therefore no information provided by children and/or other individuals about any form of child abuse shall be made public without the prior consent of the child /his or her parents / his or her legal guardian tutor and/or the person reporting this abuse. The non-respect of this principle of confidentiality can lead to sanctions.

HI ensures that children (and their families) are protected and will also be kept fully informed at all times of the process underway for handling the incident and of its outcome.

Concerns, allegations or disclosures shall be reported in writing. Reports shall be as precise as possible, giving an exact account of what happened,

how it happened etc. and including the sequence of events and all subsequent actions taken. All reports shall be kept under lock and key and access to them shall be restricted to the [Regional] Programme Director / Country Manager, under HQ supervision (Geographical Division Directors and Human Resources Director). Any transfer of information (either verbal or electronic) shall be done in such a way as to guarantee confidentiality.

Should the allegation concern staff from another organization, the [Regional] Program Director / Country Manager shall decide how to approach the issue with the organization concerned before reporting it to a third party, and with due regard to local legislation.

4.4 Procedures with partners

HI shall not enter into a partnership agreement with organisations whose staff or members are liable to commit acts of abuse against children, as described in section 2 of this policy. Any proven allegations of such practices shall result in the termination of the partnership agreement unless the partner commits to and effectively ensures a radical change in behavior.

5 Monitoring / evaluation

A followed-up on policy and practices are monitored permanently.

The [Regional] Program Director / Country Manager is responsible for information on policy and practice, as well as for monitoring all matters relating to abuse within the HI network and for reporting them to the Safeguarding Policies Officer, Operations Director / Manager and Human Resources Director at HQ.

HI. Safeguarding Framework. Lyon - HI, 2020

HI. Code of conduct: Integrity, Prevention of abuse and SLyon: HI 2019, updated 2021.

HI. Protection of beneficiaries against Sexual Exploitation, Abuses and Harassment. Lyon : HI, 2011, 2019, update 2021

HI. Fraud & Corruption Policy. HI 2021

Contact :

Direction of Risks & Audits

Photo credit © Brice Blondel/HI (Kenya, 2011)



Child Protection Policy

This paper presents HI's approach to child protection. It provides a policy framework and defines prevention and response mechanisms.

Handicap International – Humanity & Inclusion
138, avenue des Frères
LumièreCS 78378
69371 Lyon CEDEX 08
France

