



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY

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DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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1. PURPOSE

The ACDI/VOCA Group Child Safeguarding Policy is designed to create and maintain an environment that protects children from abuse, exploitation, or neglect by proactively developing mandatory child protection procedures that identify and mitigate risks.

Child Safeguarding refers to all activities intended to proactively prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation, or neglect of children involved in any way within ACDI/VOCA Group projects. ACDI/VOCA Group is committed to deterring or intervening in all activities that may facilitate or ignore child abuse, exploitation, or neglect by ACDI/VOCA Group personnel, as well as by personnel associated with subawardees, subcontractors, grant recipients, or donors.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

ACDI/VOCA prohibits any and all sexual activity with children at all times (both during and outside of working hours) and in all places, regardless of the legal age of consent in the country. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense. Sexual activity with a child will result in termination of employment, and the pursuit of any other appropriate legal remedies, including criminal charges.

ACDI/VOCA Group prohibits all employees, board members, volunteers, interns, subawardees, and consultants from engaging in child abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

Every ACDI/VOCA project is required to develop local procedures to ensure compliance with host country laws, U.S. laws, and international standards, whichever gives greater protection.

ACDI/VOCA conducts child-safe screening procedures when hiring ACDI/VOCA personnel, particularly personnel whose work brings them into direct contact with children.

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy is applicable to the ACDI/VOCA Group (ACDI/VOCA, Tanager, AV Ventures) as well as to all subawardees, grantees, volunteers, interns, Board Members, consultants, and subcontractors on every project.

This policy applies at all times when ACDI/VOCA Group employees are working on a project, whether during working hours or not. If you are an ACDI/VOCA Group employee working on a project in a participating country, you are within the scope of this policy.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ACDI/VOCA Group requires all of its staff, subawardees, grantees, subcontractors, volunteers, and partners to adhere to the highest standards of accountability and professionalism, which requires honest, ethical, and non-abusive or exploitative conduct as described in the Policy Statement. ACDI/VOCA requires personnel to fully enforce adherence to this standard as follows:

Human Resources

- Ensure distribution of policy, implementation guidance, training, orientation materials;
- Ensure child-safe recruitment screening processes are implemented.

Project Directors/COPs

- Work with HR, AMS, and relevant technical staff to develop project-specific child safeguarding procedures;
- Oversee full implementation of this policy in their project, including ensuring all staff are trained on the policy and procedures, including how to report;
- Oversee the collection and review of data related to the potential risk of harm to children, the development and implementation of risk mitigation plan/procedures, and the monitoring/reporting of possible incidents;
- Work with AMS to ensure child safeguarding requirements and procedures that are substantially similar to these are incorporated into subaward agreements, including ensuring subawardees are trained on the policy and procedures, including how to report; and
- Create and maintain an environment and culture that promotes respect for and safety of children, and prevents any form of child exploitation and abuse.

ACDI/VOCA Affiliates

- Tanager and AV Ventures personnel shall work with ACDi/VOCA's Human Resources Department and the Chief Legal Officer to promulgate this policy within their respective organizations.

Mandatory Reporting

- ACDI/VOCA Group requires everyone who has reviewed and acknowledged this Policy to report all allegations or suspicions of child abuse, exploitation, or neglect they encounter. There is no minimum threshold for reporting, so long as the reports are made in good faith.
- ACDI/VOCA Group will never take adverse employment action against an individual who reports a concern in good faith.

5. POLICY PROCEDURES

ACDI/VOCA ensures compliance with this policy through the following procedures:

- All potential new staff undergo a child-safe screening prior to hiring
- All staff are informed and trained on the policy requirements and responsibilities

- For each new project, project identify the potential risk of harm to children and develop risk mitigation plan/procedures to ensure risk to children are minimized to the extent reasonably possible
- Contracts/subawards/grants include obligations to adhere to this policy
- Images, videos, interviews with children require written consent from guardians and are conducted in a manner that ensures respect, dignity, privacy, and compliance with applicable laws
- Identifying information of children participants is not disclosed without written consent from guardians unless the disclosure is specifically for the protection of the child
- Identifying information is stored in a properly secured manner
- Information about our safeguarding policy is shared internally (training, part of our onboarding), and externally (partners, with communities served, and donors)
- Staff, partners, stakeholders, project participants can report allegations of child abuse or exploitation via ACDI/VOCA's Ethics Hotline, which is made available publicly
- All reports are disclosed to the donor as and when the donor requires

Clauses to include:

- Concerns about child safeguarding should be reported through ACDI/VOCA's Ethics Reporting System which can be found under "Ethics" on the ACDI/VOCA webpage at www.acdivoca.org or by going directly to <https://www.acdivoca.org/ethics-at-acdi-voca-affiliates/>
- ACDI/VOCA maintains a strict non-retaliation policy for reporting concerns, even if allegations are investigated and found to be unsubstantiated, so long as the concerns were reported in good faith. Knowingly making false reports can be grounds for disciplinary action.

6. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to or deviations from this policy for specific projects may be authorized only by the ACDI/VOCA Ethics Committee.

7. DEFINITIONS

Child: A child or children are defined as persons who have not attained 18 years of age.

Child abuse, exploitation, or neglect: Constitutes any form of physical abuse; emotional ill-treatment; sexual abuse; neglect or insufficient supervision; trafficking; or commercial, transactional, labor, or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, well-being, survival, development, or dignity. It includes, but is not limited to: any act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm to a child, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child.

Child safeguarding: the set of policies, procedures, and practices ACDI/VOCA employs to ensure our organization is child-safe. It is about making our programs and operations safe for children and involves collective and individual responsibility for taking preventative actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk of or actual harm by staff, representatives and third parties who may come into contact with children

or impact them through our interventions and operations. This includes direct program implementation, work with partners, and management of children’s personal data.

Exploitation: Constitutes the abuse of a child where some form of remuneration is involved or whereby the perpetrators benefit in some manner. Exploitation represents a form of coercion and violence that is detrimental to the child’s physical or mental health, development, education, or well-being.

Neglect: Constitutes failure to provide for a child's basic needs within USAID-funded activities that are responsible for the care of a child in the absence of the child's parent or guardian.

8. REFERENCES

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/200mbt.pdf>

48 Code of Federal Regulations §752.757

<https://www.usaid.gov/PreventingSexualMisconduct/Partners/Child-Safeguarding/FAQ>

ACDI/VOCA CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I certify that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the ACDI/VOCA Child Safeguarding Policy as well as the project-specific procedures associated with the policy.

Name

Signature