

Child Protection Policy

humedica e.V.

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Introduction

humedica is committed to protect children from harm.

All children have the right to protection. They have the right to survive, to be safe, to belong, to be heard, to receive adequate care and to grow up in a protective environment.

But millions of children are not fully protected. Many of them are forced to deal with violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, exclusion and/or discrimination every day. Such violations limit their chances of surviving, growing, developing, and pursuing their dreams.

The situation of structural poverty or an emergency does affect a child's feeling of security and hope in an extraordinary manner.

Children in structural poverty or in emergencies are particularly vulnerable to a range of risks like separation from family, recruitment into armed forces, sexual exploitation, and gender-based violence, physical harm, and psychosocial distress.

It is our concern from the very start of our intervention, to respond to children's most basic needs, to promote child protection and to engage with families, communities, governments, and donors to ensure that the children as most vulnerable persons involved are not forgotten in the chaos.

Staff including paid staff and volunteers of humedica accept and recognize our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which cause children harm.

The motivation of our acting is based on our mission statement:

humedica perceives itself as an international community of full-time and voluntary employees, donors and patrons who by their means, abilities and talents put themselves into service for the assistance for people who are in distress from disaster or structural poverty.

In the process, humedica acts as intermediary between the affected parties and helpful people and institutions by pointing out concrete states of emergencies, activating resources and providing effective as well as efficient assistance.

We regard humedica as an organization, which believes in God's friendly providence and trust in his guidance. Our institutional acting and behaviour shall be oriented towards this positive relationship to God.

As a member of VENRO (the umbrella organization of development and humanitarian aid non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Germany) humedica is committed to establish child protection and following standards and criteria in its projects:

- We assure the protection of children from all forms of abuse in the delivery of our projects within our institutional structures and the local project partners.
- We establish a safe environment and guarantee that human rights including children rights will be respected.

- We promote the participation of children in all project activities and consider their interests in the planning and implementation.
- We raise awareness of child protection issues within our organization and towards our partner organizations and sensitize for child protection issues.
- We develop and implement appropriate tools for prevention, case management system and monitoring of child protection and for the decision about the specific responsibilities.
- We respect and safeguard the dignity of children in all our publications and other media presentations.
- We call attention of political or economic decision-makers and other networks to promote children rights.

The information in this manual will explain humedica's attitude towards child protection. It will assist everybody who is involved in humedica-projects in making decisions and taking action to ensure that children are protected from abuse during the delivery of all humedica's projects.

The special importance of this policy is to emphasize the self-commitment humedica's to work actively for the protection of children.

A proverb says:

"It is easier to build up a child than it is to repair an adult."

Kaufbeuren, January 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johannes Peter".

Johannes Peter
Chief Executive Officer
humedica e.V.

1. Policy Statement

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is paramount.
- Every child, whatever its age, culture, disability, gender, language, ethnic origin, religious belief or sexual identity has the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns – either to the supervisor in the field or to the the humedica ombudsperson
(mail: complaints@humedica.org,
phone 0049 (0) 8431 966 148 220 or mobile 0049 (0) 151-420 566 15).
- Even if not necessarily every staff member is professionally trained to deal with abuse situations or to decide whether abuse has occurred, every staff member knows where he or she can get professional support in the situation.

We will aim to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Demanding all partner-organizations of humedica to adopt child protection guidelines.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and careers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

This policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Preventive measures for child abuse
- Clear responsibilities and functions
- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers
- Implementation of the humedica Child Protection Policy

2. Legal Framework of Child Protection

2.1. From the international laws and convention

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides a comprehensive code of rights, which offers the highest standards of protection and assistance for children. It has 54 Articles. More states have joined the Convention on the Rights of the Child than any other UN convention, namely all member states with the exception of the USA.

The UNCRC defines a “child” as everyone less than 18 years of age “unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (Article 1).

It is legally binding on every government, which is a party to it and applies to all children within the jurisdiction of each state.

A special monitoring body, the Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors the implementation of the Convention at the national level by state parties and makes recommendations for its further implementation.

Two additional protocols 1977:

- Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts
- Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

For humedica the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the moral and legal basis for its commitment to work together with its partners for the protection and welfare of children in their funded projects. The UNCRC and its additional protocols therefore serve as a legally binding framework for the present Child Protection Policy.

Apart from this, in all countries, where humedica works, it recognizes the laws which the National Governments have implemented to protect children from abuse.

3. Definitions of abuse

These definitions are based on those from “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (HM Government UK, Department of Health, Home office, Department for Education and Employment, 1999, Department of Education 2018)

3.1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, fabricated or induced illness in children or “Munchausen Syndrome by proxy” after the person who first identified this situation.

A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention, they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being the result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

3.2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause heavy and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also involve causing children to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

3.3. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex,

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching or hearing sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and or females, by adults and by other young people.

3.4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, leaving a young child home alone (physical neglect). Medical neglect includes the failure to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment whereas educational neglect occurs when it is not ensured that the child receives education. It may also include emotional neglect by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating, or isolating the child.

3.5. Note

These four definitions do not minimize other forms of maltreatment.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any time.

Recent guidance notes other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or caregiver, or drug and alcohol misuse. These may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organization caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

4. Preventive measures for child abuse

humedica aims to minimize the risk of child abuse and supports preventive measures within its power. In general, prevention covers three different aspects:

- to sensitize parents, educators, humedica staff and volunteers

In most cases, children are not violated by strangers but by people who are close to them – parents, relatives, or guardians. To sensitise this group of people and to advise them how to treat children, is a very effective way to reduce child abuse.

- to create a safe environment by establishing rules and guidelines
humedica aims to avoid abusive situations and furthermore to avoid abuse of children by establishing guidelines and code of conducts in all its projects.
- to empower children – to make children strong
Self-confident and self-conscious children become less victims than others. To sensitize a child for its own feelings and to emphasize the strong side of the child can reduce the risk of abuse. Children shall know that adults are not allowed to touch children how they like and that children have the right to say “no”.

5. Fundamental basics of the humedica child protection system

In order to ensure the protection of children entrusted to humedica and its projects, we have developed measures and mechanisms to prevent abuse and violation:

5.1. Principles and guidance

The humedica child protection policy describes guidelines and principles that advocate for child protection. It describes which behaviour is expected of the employees, whether paid or voluntary staff, which preventive measures humedica takes and how disregard of the child protection policy is handled. The policy is published on the homepage and accessible to everyone. All employees are obliged to comply with the guidelines.

5.2. Awareness raising and prevention

We sensitize our employees, partners, and the beneficiaries in child protection issues.

It is the responsibility of all of us to protect children from abuse and to work for a safe environment. The Child Protection Policy provides information about the different types and the detection of abuse and encourages everyone to create an environment to prevent abuse.

5.3. Disclosure and reporting

We make sure that employees, collaborators, and beneficiaries of humedica projects know how to report abuse or allegations of abuse which take place in the context of humedica projects and that they know how to seek help for those affected.

5.4. Further training of employees and partners

We train and inform our employees (paid or unpaid) and beneficiaries about child protection issues to ensure that they know their responsibilities, take protective measures to avoid abuse and recognize signs of abuse.

5.5. Monitoring, reporting and accountability

We monitor whether the Child Protection Policy measures are implemented and actively carried out in the projects and programmes.

5.6. Clear responsibilities and functions

The organisation's management, in the form of the executive board, but also each individual employee is responsible for the consistent protection of the minors entrusted to humedica. Each individual has the specific task of supporting and developing procedures that maintain this environment.

5.7. Child Protection Focal Person

To ensure the implementation of child protection measures, the Child Protection Focal Person at HQ will be the contact person for child protection. This person will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. The CP Focal Person must have the necessary capacity, skills and abilities to work with projects, programmes and team leaders of emergency missions on child protection issues and ensure that the child protection policy is effectively implemented.

The areas of responsibility of the Child Protection Focal Person include:

- sensitizing staff, beneficiaries, partners and the public to humedica 's commitment for child protection
- promoting child protection issues and raising awareness for child protection throughout the organisation
- promoting the implementation of the humedica child protection policy in all humedica projects
- assisting project coordinators in the implementation of the guidelines and measures on child protection
- acting as a first point of contact for staff on all matters relating to child protection
- ensuring development of mechanisms for staff reporting
- coordinating trainings for staff
- monitoring internal child protection implementation
- recording all information about child protection concerns
- tracking all child protection related activities
- regularly reviewing the Child Protection Policy

6. What to do after a child has talked about an abuse

- The person who talks to the child has to provide basic emergency medical assistance and basic psychosocial support as appropriate.
- He / She makes notes as soon as possible (ideally within 4 hours of being told).
- He / She writes down exactly what the child said and what the person said in reply
- He / she does not ask the child any questions.
- He / she writes down what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered)
- All activities should be documented in writing by filling the Child Protection Report Form
- All written notes must be kept securely.
- The person of trust has to be informed as outlined in the reporting and investigation of misconduct-scheme (see annex) to clarify the further procedure.

Under no circumstances is the humedica staff attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicion of an abuse!

After a child has disclosed abuse, the staff should carefully consider whether it is safe for a child to return to the potentially abusive situation. On these occasions, it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact local government bodies to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

7. What to do if there is the suspicion that an abuse may have occurred

The person who has the suspicion that an abuse may have occurred has to do the following:

- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The staff has to take the child to a clinic.
- In other circumstances the staff will talk with the parents/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child.
- The staff might contact social services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the child. The parents should not be informed in these circumstances.
- In cases of neglect, the staff is explicitly requested to talk and advise the person who did neglect a child. The staff should do everything necessary to build awareness about neglect, especially if the neglect occurred at the home of the neglected child.
- The person of trust has to be informed as outlined in the reporting and investigation of misconduct-scheme (see annex) to clarify the further procedure.

8. What to do in the event of appearance of sexual abuse

- The person who discovers an incident must assess the information quickly and carefully.
- He / She must document all her/his activities in writing by filling the Child Protection Report Form.
- He / She must inform the ombudsperson or person of trust to clarify the further procedure
- In case there is no obvious sign of an abuse, but somebody raises an allegation or suspicion against another person, he / she must take such steps as considered to be necessary to ensure the safety of the concerned child and any other child who may be in risk
-

Under no circumstances is the humedica staff attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicion of sexual abuse!

9. Allegations against a member of staff

In the case of allegations against a member of staff, humedica investigates in a timely and professional manner.

This includes the use of appropriate interviewing practices with complainants and witnesses, particularly with children with the engagement of professional investigators or the provision of investigative expertise as appropriate.

humedica will take swift and appropriate action, including legal action when required, against humedica staff who endanger children's safety. This may include administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant authorities for appropriate action, including criminal prosecution, in the abuser's country of origin as well as the host country.

humedica takes appropriate action to the best of our abilities to protect persons from retaliation when allegations of child abuse are made in good faith and establish procedures which encourages persons to report on concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals.

In case of an acute security risk of the concerned persons, where immediate action is needed, you can call the humedica emergency number +49 173 239 1835.

Allegations and cases of child abuse can also be reported to a confidential person.

For this purpose, an ombudsperson, is installed by the board of directors of humedica.

This person can always be contacted under the mail address: complaints@humedica.org or the phone number 0049 (0) 8341 966 148 220 and mobile 0049 (0) 151-42056615

The involvement of the ombudsperson is generally required in cases of abuse involving humedica staff (paid or unpaid) or persons at the executive or management level or involving humedica partners.

The ombudsperson's role is to prevent that existing hierarchies and relationships of trust hinder inquiries and investigations of solving cases of suspected abuse.

The responsibilities and procedures of the humedica reporting system for employee misconduct are described in the document annexed.

10. Code of conduct

All staff of humedica – paid staff or volunteers – need to know the adequate behaviour towards children in order to avoid any risk of misuse of children.

This will be achieved through ensuring that:

- All staff and volunteers must keep professional distance to the children.
- All team members should treat all children with dignity and respect in attitude, language, and actions.
- All staff and volunteers must treat all children and their families with respect, esteem and love in attitude, language, and actions.
- There are no favourite children nor “darlings”. All children are respected and treated equally.
- In hugs and body contacts, attention is paid to adequacy and to voluntariness of the children.
- Every member of humedica must obey its Child Protection Policy.
- humedica must give awareness of this Child Protection Policy to every new staff.
- Team members should not be alone with a child in a room, although it is recognized that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful. If it is necessary, the team member should be of the same sex as the child and shall preferably leave the door open.
- Visitors will sign the visitor/guest book or the visitor consent form and will not be left alone with the children.
- In case of overnight stays, team members will not sleep in one room with the children.
- Whenever possible, team members should only escort children of the same sex to the toilet. Assistance with toileting should be given to those children who are in need of it. If a

child is able to use the toilet independently, assistance should only be given, if the child has a special need that has been communicated to the team by the parents/guardians.

- We recognize that physical touch between adults and children can be healthy and acceptable in public places. However, the team members will be discouraged from this in circumstances where adults and children are alone.
- Any use of pornographic images or pornographic material on paper or on electronic is prohibited.
- When anyone observes any kind of abuse, the concern has immediately be reported.
-

11. Implementation of the humedica Child Protection Policy

We aim to protect children from abuse and the team members from false allegations by adopting the following measures and mechanisms:

Respect of the Child Protection Policy and guidance	In the planning, implementing and monitoring of humedica projects, child protection issues always have to be considered.
Translation of CPP	The humedica-Child Protection Policy will be translated in different main languages where humedica carries out larger projects.
Awareness and public relations	humedica is committed to inform all staff, supporters, and the public of its Child Protection Policy by publishing it on the organisational homepage or by elaborating posters and other dissemination material.
Staff and partner development	Refresher sessions will be conducted annually for the staff to renew their knowledge on the humedica Child Protection Policy, the organisational commitment on child protection and the possibilities of cross cutting issues.
Monitoring, reporting and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will keep a list of all children registered at our humedica facilities. • Written consent from parents or a guardian will be obtained for every child registered at our humedica facility. • Only children who are accompanied by parents or guardians will receive medical treatment. • We will keep a register of all team members (both paid staff members and volunteers). Their working hours are indicated at the staff schedule. • In case of an abuse or the allegation of abuse of children who are supported in humedica projects, the staff will fill the CP Report Form and inform the supervisor.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of the allegation of abuse by a member of the humedica staff, humedica has installed the case management system for reporting and investigation of misconduct
Fast reaction to suspicious cases	humedica is an organisation with a clear distribution of responsibilities and templates that enables rapid action.
Child Protection as a cross cutting issue	In order to effectively address child protection issues, we are aware that CP is not only a stand-alone programme but also a cross-cutting issue. We are committed to integrate CP into all aspects of the humanitarian response and development projects and are conscious that our activities do not lead to discrimination, abuse, exploitation or violence.
Child Protection in emergencies	humedica provides humanitarian assistance in emergency and disaster. In emergencies there is an increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. humedica is committed to provide professional and competent support towards the concerned group and to promote the minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action. As base of our intervention serves the manual which was elaborated by the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) https://alliancecpha.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/cpms_2019_final_en.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35094)

12. Media

In all our media and publications such as photos, recordings, stories and web presence, we recognise the dignity and respect of children and their families.

We only feature children who are supported by humedica or involved in humedica projects and activities.

We are aware of the vulnerability of children and take care not to depict children in a particularly needy or pitiful way. Furthermore, it is a matter of course for us that children's images are not used for advertising purposes.

13. Visitor Guidelines

We welcome everyone to visit humedica-projects at the project site.

We are pleased to give this opportunity to learn more about the work of humedica and its programmes. Coordinators, staff, and children enjoy introducing visitors to their daily routine and schedule and they will do their level best to make the visit to a special experience for everyone.

Country Coordinator, team leader and staff will support the organisation of the visit and will take care that the daily routine and agenda of the project will be considered.

Visitors shall be conscious that they might only get a little impression of the programme especially during short-term visits. It might not be possible to understand the project in its full extend, but humedica always tries to create an atmosphere where visitors feel free to ask questions and to get to know deeper humedica's mission and statement.

For better understanding, we advise interested visitors to get more information about the country and its culture before the visit. This will increase the visitor's comprehension of the different way of living in this foreign environment.

As the children's protection is one of our major concerns, we are engaged to minimize any risk for the safety of the children. Visits of people from outside the project shall have positive influences to the children as well and not lead to any harm of our protégés.

This present Child Protection Policy indeed explains our commitment and all visitors are asked to read carefully the humedica Visitors Guidelines and to sign the guestbook.

14. History of the humedica-Child protection Policy

The first edition of the humedica Child Protection Policy was published in July 2016. This document is the result of a permanent process of updating humedica's guidelines and policies and valid from January 2023.

Date		Revision
July 2016	Child Protection Policy 2016/V3	First edition of humedica Child Protection Policy
July 2019	Child Protection Policy 2019/V1	Update of humedica Child Protection Policy 2016/V3
May 2022	Child Protection Policy 2022/V4	Actualisation of the humedica Child Protection Policy 2019/V1
January 2023	Child Protection Policy 2023/V1	Actualisation of the humedica Child Protection Policy 2022/V4

15. Annexes

humedica Child Protection Report Form

Visitor guidelines

VENRO Code of Conduct Child Rights

Document "Reporting and investigation of misconduct"

humedica Child Protection Report form

If you have knowledge that a child's safety might be in danger or If there is the allegation of abuse by a member of the humedica staff, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge and forward it to your supervisor or to the humedica ombudsperson (Mail: complaints@humedica.org, phone 0049 (0) 8431 966 148 220 or mobile 0049 (0) 151-420 566 15.

This report is to be used as a tool to develop the most un-biased and information-based report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you.

1 About You

Your name _____

Your relationship to the child _____

Contact details _____

2 About the Child

Child's name: _____

Child's gender: _____

Child's age: _____

Child's address: _____

Child's guardians: _____

3 About your Concern

Was the abuse observed or suspected? _____

Is this concern based on first-hand information or information divulged to you by someone else?

(If so who?) _____

Did the child disclose the abuse to you? _____

Date of the alleged incident: _____

Time of the alleged incident: _____

Location of the alleged incident: _____

Name of alleged perpetrator: _____

Job title: _____

Nature of the allegation: _____

Your personal observations (visible injuries, child's emotional state, etc.)
[Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay]

Describe exactly what the child or other source said to you and how you responded to him or her.

Any other information not previously covered

Were there any other children/people involved in the incident?

Place, Date, Signature
of the reporting person

Visitor Guidelines

We are very glad to receive you as a visitor and welcome you at the humedica project site. The local team will help you to plan your stay in the project and will always be prepared to answer your questions.

We want you to feel home with the teams and the children at our institutions and projects and wish you a fruitful experience at the humedica site.

humedica is committed to regard Child's dignity and to assure child protection. This is our primary concern, and we ask all visitors to support this attitude.

For more information on humedica's commitment, please read the humedica child protection policy, which is publicly available in the download area of the humedica homepage.

While your visit at a humedica project site, we request you

- meet the children as well as their families with respect, esteem and love;
 - treat all children with dignity and respect in both language and action;
 - keep optimal viewing distance to the children;
 - refrain from drinking alcohol and smoking in presence of the children;
 - do not offer alcohol, drugs and tobacco to one of our protégées regardless their age;
 - the use of drugs is absolutely forbidden;
 - do not stay alone with a child in a room nor leave the compound with a child;
 - do not exchange e-mail addresses or become social media- friends (facebook, tik tok, instagram, snapchat, etc.) with the children;
 - if you want to give presents and little gifts, discuss with the local team the most important need instead of doing individual donations;
 - do not escort children to the toilet;
- Assistance with toileting should only be given by the parents or guardian.

About taking pictures: Photos of you and the children are always a special souvenirs and most children love to be photographed. It is very important to us to treat children respectfully and at eye level. Therefore, when photographing and filming the children, the dignity and personality of the children must be explicitly respected.

Regarding the publication of photos and videos, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that the publication of photos and videos affects the personal rights of the child and that the consent of the parents or legal guardians is mandatory. Once published on the internet or social media, it remains there forever and can still have negative consequences for the child many years later.

2011

VENRO Code of Conduct for Children's Rights: Protecting children against abuse and exploitation in development co- operation and humanitarian aid

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- Frame of reference
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Introduction

In the VENRO statutes, VENRO members have committed to make a contribution towards making the world a more just place. Working together, the German non-governmental organisations want to be even more committed to the fight against hunger, the realisation of human rights and the maintenance of natural living environments. In line with the principle >Children's rights are human rights<, all VENRO members are committed to strengthening the rights of boys and girls and protecting them against abuse and exploitation as part of their work in development co-operation and humanitarian aid. In this context, the organisation of the two work fields should aim to create an environment that is safe for children¹ and persons at risk, and that guarantees compliance with human rights. This also includes protection against abuse in line with their own organisational and partner structures.

On 13 December 2007, the VENRO General Assembly unanimously adopted the >White Paper on Children's Rights: Protection of Children against Abuse and Exploitation in Development Co-operation<, which forms the basis for the following code of conduct.

Frame of reference

Boys and girls in every country and society are affected by sexual violence, abuse and mistreatment, as well as exploitation. Children make up a large number of the people who receive support as part of German development co-operation and humanitarian aid activities. Therefore they have a special need for protection. It is the task of development cooperation to strengthen the rights of children to improve their development opportunities and protect them against possible threats. The UN Treaty regarding the rights of the child, and the two supplemental protocols² form the frame of reference for this code of conduct. In this vein, the wellness of the child is the top priority.

¹According to the >UN Convention on the Rights of the Child< a child is "a person who has not completed his or her 18th year of age, unless the age maturity is reached earlier according to the law that applies to the child."

²See >Facultative protocol on the treaty regarding the rights of the child, with respect to the participation of children in armed conflict< and >Facultative protocol on the treaty regarding the rights of the child, with respect to child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography<.

Obligations

We want to establish the protection of children and the following standards as quality characteristics in our domestic and overseas co-operation work. The association and its members commit

1. to strengthen the rights of boys and girls with or without disabilities, and to protect them against sexual, emotional or physical abuse, exploitation and neglect;
2. to create a safe environment for children and persons at risk that guarantees compliance with children's and human rights;
3. to involve children in the activities that affect them, and to take their interests into account during the planning and implementation of our activities;
4. to create awareness of this issue within our organisation and at our partners;
5. to develop and implement suitable instruments, including clearly defined responsibilities and procedures in the area of prevention, crisis management and monitoring;
6. to ensure, as part of our media, educational and public relations work, that the dignity of the child is protected at all times;
7. to create awareness among decision-makers in politics and industry, and networks.

With the adoption of the code of conduct regarding children's rights, VENRO members also state their willingness to work on implementing the code of conduct. Experiences will be analysed and measures will be reviewed after a two-year test phase.

The VENRO Executive Board is required to follow up on alleged breaches of this code of conduct. It may involve the arbitration tribunal to identify breaches, if necessary. Once identified, breaches must be prosecuted in the appropriate manner.

*Most recent amendment at the General
Assembly on 16 December 2010 in Berlin.*

Publisher:

Association of German Development and
Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO)

e-mail: sekretariat@venro.org

Stresemannstr. 72

10963 Berlin

Internet: www.venro.org

Telephone: 030/2 63 92 99-10

Fax: 030/2 63 92 99-99

Bonn, January 2011

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Reporting and investigation of misconduct

