



# Child Safeguarding Policy of PEaCE

## PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Protecting Environment and Children Everywhere – PEaCE (ECPAT Sri Lanka) is committed to the safeguarding of all children we engage with through our work and takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse. This Policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional and personal practice to do no harm to the children who come in contact with the people associated with the organization, both inside and outside the work environment.

The safeguarding policy is closely linked with the Child Protection Policy of PEaCE, which reiterates specifically the commitment of PEaCE to protect children through its programme interventions as well as through its organisational policy to protect children with whom it comes into contact.

## VALUES

This Policy is driven by the following values and principles

- *The Best Interest of any children involved.* When dealing with a Child Safeguarding concern, the best interest of the child will be our priority and we will strive to ensure their safety, health and well- being including meeting their emotional, psychological and physical needs.
- *Rights-based approach and right of participation and non- discrimination.* Children should be empowered to understand their rights in this area, and made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern. •
- *Personal responsibility.* All representatives of PEaCE International must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote the policy. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns or potential breaches of the policy.
- *Universality.* The Policy includes mandatory requirements that apply to everyone in all aspects of PEaCE International's work regardless of how and where they work including during the response to humanitarian emergencies.

- *Standards based approach.* PEaCE has adopted a standards-based approach to Child Safeguarding. Our safeguarding standards and standards of employees' behaviour are often higher than those of the national laws and community custom or tradition. Nevertheless, it is our standards that representatives agree to when they join the PEaCE family and it is to these that they will be held account.
- *Transparency and accountability.* This is essential in order to ensure that poor practice can be addressed, potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged and best practice promoted.
- *Accountability to children and their communities.* Through strengthening our internal systems, standards and practice we will be more accountable to the people we aim to serve.
- *Confidentiality.* All Child Safeguarding concerns/reports/ investigations will be dealt with on a need-to-know basis and all records will be held securely. Likewise, communication will be confidential and secure.
- *Compliance.* The policy will be implemented in adherence with the U.N.C.R.C.1989; The Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2003, the U.K. Charity Commissioners and with due consideration to the local legal frameworks.

## **SCOPE**

This Safeguarding Policy is adopted to ensure that PEaCE employees, Board members, partners, volunteers, interns, consultants – or anyone acting as a representative of PEaCE - will do no harm to children who come in contact with them within or outside their work.

This Policy deals with the engaging stakeholders in the safeguarding of children as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (people under 18 years of age).

## **OUR COMMITMENT**

PEaCE takes extensive steps to safeguard children that we are in contact with through our work. As outlined in this policy and procedures, there are clear consequences for breaches. ECPAT International operates in compliance with relevant national legislation. However, our child safeguarding policy and procedures also go above and beyond the law with more rigorous expectations of our people in certain circumstances. ECPAT International respects, and will generally work to strengthen, the culture, traditions and practices of the communities in which it works. However, in instances where cultural practices are harmful to children's rights, we advocate for their elimination. The best interests of the child are always central to our decisions.

PEaCE is fully committed to protect and promote the rights of every child and create an environment in which the safety and security of every child is assured.

PEaCE recognises that it has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that children are protected from exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect from its employees, Board members, partners,

volunteers, interns, consultants and other representatives, within and outside the PEaCE programmes – directly or indirectly.

Children can be potentially subject to exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect in families, communities, institutions, organisations, private places, public places by various circumstances by variety of people, including people associated with PEaCE.

As a founder and member of ECPAT International, PEaCE accepts and adopts the Safeguarding Policy of ECPAT International to address this issue.

## **DEFINITIONS**

While it is common to include a section detailing relevant child safeguarding definitions directly in policy, PEaCE subscribes to, and promotes the terminology agreed in the Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Luxembourg Guidelines), including important projects that contextualise and translate terminology into languages other than English. These are available at <http://luxembourgguidelines.org/>.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Awareness**

For effective implementation of the Policy, it needs to be understood accurately by all. PEaCE will conduct a series of briefings to its employees, Board members, associates, volunteers, interns, consultants and other representatives. PEaCE will make all people associated with it aware of the Safeguarding Policy through training, induction and briefing.

Child Safeguarding Focal Point – PEaCE should assign an officer with the responsibility of being the child safeguarding focal point will coordinate awareness, as well as receive concerns and assist the Senior Management Team to investigate and respond as required.

### **Recruitment**

PEaCE will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that our people do not pose an unacceptable risk to children. For consultants and others representing PEaCE, an assessment for risks related to contact with children (real-life or virtual) will be made before deciding on whether a criminal record check will be performed. Additionally, a range of additional safeguarding recruitment procedures will be applied depending on risks related to contact with children. These include: - Specific child safeguarding interview questions - Signed commitment to the Code of Conduct.

### **Risk Assessment and Management**

The sensitive nature of the work of PEaCE is associated with child safeguarding risks. We are committed to doing everything in our power to identify and minimise preventable risk, and manage the impacts of concerns when they occur. In the interest of preventing risk, we conduct and document child safeguarding risk assessment as part of the development of all new projects. Furthermore, in line with our Partnerships Policy, all new partnerships include child safeguarding

screening. Partner assessment before concluding a partnership agreement, includes assessment of their child safeguarding policies and procedures. Safeguarding screening does not extend to service providers unless exceptional circumstances indicate contact with children (e.g. catering services for child participation events).

## **Raising Concerns**

Board members, employees, consultants, interns and volunteers or others must inform PEaCE via the mentioned contact points when they have a reasonable belief that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm by:

- PEaCE board members, employees, consultants, interns and volunteers, or others representing the organisation
- When it is due to the actions of employees or representatives of other ECPAT International network member organisations.

### **Concerns that must be raised include:**

- An observation or disclosure (by an adult or child) of actual harm or abuse to a child - A suggestion or indication of potential harm or abuse to a child
- A breach of the Child Protection Policy or Child Safeguarding Procedures
- Child sexual abuse material that is received through PEaCE's electronic equipment - A child or adult unconnected to PEaCE presents credible evidence that a child is being abused or exploited.
- Within 24 hours of becoming aware of the concern you must raise a complaint via the following contact points:
  - The Executive Director
  - The Child Safeguarding Focal Point
  - The Chair of the Board of Directors. Informing can be done in person, by phone or email. Verbal methods should be followed up in writing as soon as possible

## **Prevention**

As a prevention measure children's rights to protection will be safeguarded at all times through appropriate management practices, which includes policies and procedures for recruitment of employees and the selection of Board of Directors; risk assessments and management plans; adequate supervision of children in our care or with whom we have contact with; and policy for appropriate use of information technology (such as email, mobile phones, internet).

## **Reporting**

Clear steps and guidelines on reporting the incidences violating the Codes will be established as well as actions to be taken.

## **Responding**

PEaCE employees, Board members, associates, volunteers, interns, consultants – or anyone acting as a representative of PEaCE will ensure that positive action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise. PEaCE takes seriously any concerns raised and will support

children, employees or adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns. PEaCE will act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent investigation. All responses will be guided by the principle of 'best interests of the child'.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

Non-compliance with the above shall be taken seriously. This will involve a thorough investigation and referral of cases to the police and/or social services if national or international child rights laws have been violated.

## **Monitoring**

The management of PEaCE and Board members within PEaCE associates are responsible for ensuring that the intentions of ECPAT International in relation to safeguarding children are taking place and to monitor and evaluate action and effectiveness.

## **THE COMMITMENT WE EXPECT FROM YOU**

PEaCE expects the same high standards from all of our partners, contractors, suppliers and all third parties we are working with (referred to as "All parties" for the purpose of this section) , including taking measures to prohibit their employees and representatives from engaging in any child sexual exploitation , sexual abuse or any other form of abuse or exploitation in their working and person lives.

- a) All parties must have a zero-tolerance policy on Child abuse and exploitation and take all measures available to prevent and respond to actual, attempted or threatened forms of child abuse and exploitation involving employees or representatives, or organisation's employees or representatives that arises during performance of the terms of this Agreement.
- b) All parties must ensure that their employees and those working with PEaCE are fully aware of this policy and encourage them to report incidents of suspected or actual child abuse involving employees or representatives, or organisation's employees or representatives that arises during performance of the terms of this Agreement.
- c) All parties must immediately report any suspicion of child abuse or exploitation occurring in their organisation, that arises during the performance of the terms of this agreement with PEaCE. Failure to report will be treated as serious and may result in termination of any agreement with PEaCE.
- d) When you or any employees working for PEaCE under your control suspect or become aware of a child safeguarding concern in relation to work for PEaCE, all parties are required to act quickly and immediately report suspicions or knowledge of a safeguarding concern or incident to a relevant contact at Child Safeguarding Focal Point and PEaCE Chairman
- e) All parties will cooperate with PEaCE in any investigations of concerns reported under this Agreement, and keep PEaCE promptly updated on any concerns reported under this Agreement.