CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ADVANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

acri | P.O.BOX, 173, Iganga

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**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ADVANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE**

**FOREWORD**

Advancing Community Resilience Initiative is an organization working to provide humanitarian support to people living in disaster and poverty-stricken areas, and continues to help communities long after the world’s spotlight has faded. In humanitarian settings across the world today it is a known fact that children are likely to make up half or more of the population affected by conflicts and disasters. Some children suffer physical injuries while others are victims of emotional and psychological disorders.

ACRI considers it to be an immediate priority to protect children in humanitarian situations from violence, abuse and exploitation. This Child protection policy is aimed to transform the quality of our work with a more protective approach towards children at all times.

This policy will be applicable at all times while one is engaged with, contracted to, or employed by ACRI. This child protection policy of ACRI is in accordance with the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

**Table of Contents.**

1. **Introduction ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------3**
2. **Policy statement -------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------3**
3. **Principles underpinning safe guarding policy ------------------------------------------------------4**
4. **ACRI statement of commitment to children --------------------------------------------------------4**
5. **Definitions ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------5**
6. **Human resources -------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------7**
   1. **Safe recruiting -----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------7**
7. **Safe program design ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------8**
8. **Agreement with other partner organizations ------------------------------------------------------10**
9. **Reporting incidents ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------10**
10. **How to deal with disclosure from children ----------------------------------------------------------11**
11. **Code of conduct --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------13**
12. **Guidelines for photography -----------------------------------------------------------------------------14**
13. **Implementation of policy ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------14**
14. **Ramification of misconduct -------------------------------------------------------------------------------15**
15. **Frequently asked questions. -----------------------------------------------------------------------------15**
16. **Annex1 ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------17**
17. **Annex 2 --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------18**
18. **Introduction**

ACRI recognizes that we have a fundamental duty of care towards children and we acknowledge our responsibilities to keep children safe while engaged in our programs and activities. Several studies in the past have revealed a high rate of child abuse by NGO workers; this led to the need to adopt a child protection policy by ACRI to make its environment safe and child friendly. When actively implemented this child protection policy will make ACRI a ‘child-safe’ organization in which children are more likely to be protected from harm, and are able to play in safe environments not just around the employees of our organization but from other persons of the community we work in. This will also extend support towards children who have been abused so that they are able to disclose incidents of abuse and feel confident that they will receive support.

To achieve its goals of creating a child safe organization, ACRI employees must be skilled, confident, competent, and well supported to meet their responsibilities to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation through clear policies, procedures and good practice and to respect children and empower them with knowledge and skills to be active in their own protection.

This is an attempt to end silence as ACRI believes that silence breeds abuse and exploitation of children. Pedophiles will seek out organizations with weak communication structures and thrive where secrecy and shame prevail. Furthermore, without proper policies and explicit procedures in place, NGOs are extremely vulnerable to false allegations of child abuse. ACRI therefore believes in creating an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults.

1. **Policy statement**

Violence against children is a violation of Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Ethical Code and Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Code of Conduct.

Advancing Community Resilience Initiative strongly condemns all forms of violence against children and states that no violence against children is justifiable in any circumstance.

Advancing Community Resilience Initiative commits to do all the needful for preventing programmes having any negative effect on children. Advancing Community Resilience Initiative takes all the complaints and concerns about violence against children seriously and it initiates rigorous investigation of complaints indicating a possible violation of this Policy as well as of Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Code of Conduct and of Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Ethical Code.

This policy complements, without replacing:

* Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Ethical Code
* Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Staff Code of Conduct
* Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Sexual Harassment Policy
* Human Resources Policy

1. **PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Child Safeguarding Policy is based on the International Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its 4 funding principles - non-discrimination (art. 2), best interest of the child (art. 3), life, survival and development (art. 6), participation (art.12) – and CRC optional protocols.

Thus, Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Safeguarding Policy is ruled by the following principles:

* All children have equal rights to protection from harm, regardless of their gender, nationality, age religious or political beliefs, family background, economic status, legal status, ability, physical or mental health;
* All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which is paramount. A best interest assessment has always to be made by the staff in charge of the evaluation of the child protection concerns;
* The point of view of the children must be always taken seriously into account because effective protection can be achieved through listening to the children and creating the conditions for the child to be informed about his/her right to be heard and to freely express his/her point of view;
* Everybody has the responsibility to support the protection of children according to their role and responsibilities within the organization;
* All child protection concerns shall be addressed ensuring transparency and confidentiality. These are guaranteed by standardised case management procedures and by protecting the privacy and the personal data of the people involved, unless data transfer is necessary to protect children.

1. **ACRI STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN**

We at ACRI are committed to:

Responsibility:

Recognizing that child protection is our responsibility, whether or not our individual roles involve working directly with children and youth.

Accountability:

Actively holding ourselves and other ACRI Team Members accountable to ACRI child protection standards;

Behavior:

Acting as role models of child-friendly behaviors and practices;

Equality:

Treating all children and youth equally with respect and fairness regardless of age, culture, caste, nationality, creed, ethnicity, health status (e.g. AIDS), physical and psychological ability, family situation, sex, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and /or sexual orientation;

Practices:

Prohibiting corporal punishment, offensive or abusive language (including teasing and taunting), and the use of gestures or symbols that could be interpreted as insulting or provocative. We encourage positive strategies to manage children;

Confidentiality:

Keeping details of the victims of abuse in reported cases of abuse confidential;

Partnership:

Working in partnership with organizations which are child safe

1. **DEFINATIONS**

The definitions of child abuse and other forms of violence below are based on internationally recognized definitions of abuse, violence and the rights of the child that are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

**CHILD**: in line with Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), a child is defined as ‘every human being below the age of 18 years'.

**SURVIVOR OR VICTIM**: a person who has abuse perpetrated against him/her or an attempt to perpetrate abuse against him/her. For the purposes of these policy persons who report an abuse committed against themselves are treated as survivors for the purposes of security and needs assessments.

**COMPLAINANT**: a person who brings an allegation of abuse in accordance with established procedures. This person may be an abuse survivor or another per- son who is aware of the wrongdoing. Both the survivor and the complainant, if different from the survivor, should be protected from retaliation for reporting abuse. Where there is any conflict of interest between the survivor and another interested party, the survivor’s wishes must be the principle consideration in case handling, particularly when there is a risk of additional physical and/or emotional harm.

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING:** child safeguarding is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm2 to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

**VIOLENCE**: “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation”.

**CHILD ABUSE**: according to the definition of the World Health Organization the term child abuse, sometimes referred also as child maltreatment, is used to describe “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”.

Consists of anything which individuals, care givers, care takers, duty bearers, institutions or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. Child Abuse has serious physical and psychosocial consequences.

There are the four categories of Child Abuse

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Emotional Abuse
4. Neglect

**Physical abuse**: 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 at home is inflicted with the object of punishing”.

**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 Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child which can cause severe impacts on the child’s emotional development. This could include making a child feel worthless or unloved, inadequate or not valued.

**Neglect:**

Neglect involves the deliberate, persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs of health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions. Neglect can also be caused through the omission or the failure to act or protect.

1. Physical neglect:

Failure to protect a child from physical harm due to lack of supervision, or failure to provide the child with basic necessities including adequate food, shelter, clothing and basic medical care.

1. Psychological or emotional neglect:

Lack of any emotional support and love, chronic inattention to the child, caregivers being ‘psychologically unavailable’ by overlooking young children’s cues and signals, and exposure to intimate partner violence, drugs or alcohol abuse.

1. Abandonment:

A practice which is of great concern and which can disproportionately affect, amongst others, children out of wedlock and children with disabilities in some societies. Making a person feel unimportant and smaller than they are or to criticize someone’s character unfairly

1. Self-Harm/Abuse:

This includes use and abuse of drugs, self-inflicted injuries, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and actual suicide.

1. **HUMAN RESOURCES.**

ACRI will take progressive steps to ensure that all staff develops skills and expertise needed to work on child protection in emergencies and disaster stricken areas. ACRI will ensure that the staff of ACRI adopts appropriate procedures and policies to safeguard children. For this purpose ACRI has devised a criterion for new recruitments in the organization.

Furthermore, Orientation should be held for all employees to give an overview of the policy, action planning, roles and responsibilities. Training programs should be conducted with employees to train as to how they should respond to incidents of child abuse.

* 1. Safe recruiting

Advancing Community Resilience Initiative ensures to apply the highest standards in its recruitment across the organization. Recruiting and selection principles and procedures are detailed in Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Human Resources Policy.

As to ensure that all candidates and staff having direct or indirect contact with children are checked for their suitability for working with children, through its Child Safeguarding Policy Advancing Community Resilience Initiative commits:

* To make sure that in all vacancy advertisements Advancing Community Resilience Initiative commitment toward child safeguarding and a reference to the present Policy is included;
* To make sure staff, consultants and volunteers are recruited with clear job or role descriptions that include a statement on child safeguarding responsibilities assigned;
* To make sure all interviews include a discussion on child safeguarding, to guarantee the candidate’s understanding of this and of the organization’s commitment;
* To make sure that references taken from previous employers include questions on the candidate’s conduct and behaviour;
* To make sure that the organization is not employing a convicted abuser and deter those with previous convictions from applying, protection checks, such as criminal records or check dis- closure of previous convictions are performed. If criminal record checks are not possible, all new staff shall provide a self-certification of absence of penalties (Annex 2);
* To make sure that new employees sign contracts including Child Safeguarding Policy and the organization’s Code of Conduct
* To make sure that Child Safeguarding responsibilities are written into job descriptions and are included in performance management/appraisal discussions

Advertisements should contain a tag line mentioning the organization to be a child safe organization. While holding Interviews of selected candidates they should be briefed about the organizations policy. This will save the organization from pedophiles as they are looking for organizations that breed silence to work at. Police checks should be carried out to screen for vulnerable persons prior to employment.

While recruiting new employees should be made to agree upon the child protection policy of the organization and made to sign on the document of commitment to the policy. Additionally, the employee should be warned about cancellation of contract with the organization and other legal actions in case of misconduct or breach of the set standards and policies.

1. **SAFE PROGRAMME DESIGN**

Advancing Community Resilience Initiative is committed to design and deliver programmes that are safe for children. Thus child safeguarding shall be considered at every stage of programme or project design, even in those programmes that are not child-protection targeted.

Key actions for guaranteeing child-safe programming are the following:

* Projects are assessed with relation to potential risks for children, determined by the nature of the activity (working with children) or the design of the activity (design of the activity introduces risks to children). Risk is scored as per the table on the following page.
* In case of medium or high score a specific risk assessment is performed at design/development stage to identify risks and dangers for children, including through consultation with communities and children, to better understand protection concerns and perceived risks. Assessment focuses on relevant data on childhood conditions in the country/area, including existing community child-protection mechanisms; stakeholders involved in child protection (both as source of information and coordination/complementarity); legal, social welfare and child protection arrangements; organizational capacity etc.
* According to the results of risk assessment, risk management strategies shall be developed as to minimize the risk that the delivery of programmes or projects could harm children.
* In case at the end of the assessment too many risks are identified and in case such risks can’t be reduced or mitigated, the project should not proceed.
* Specific activities needed for child protection mainstreaming to be effective, as and if these are identified in the risk assessment, are incorporated in project’s Action Plan – including referral systems for unmet needs. Needed human and financial resources are also guaranteed.
* Before activities are conducted, the written permission of parents/caregivers and, if available, children must be obtained.
* A reporting and responding process for incidents and concerns which is locally appropriate – feed- back and complaint handling mechanism - is developed.
* Relevant technical standards and good practices employed across child-protection sector are adopted by the project
* Staff with particular responsibilities relating to child safeguarding is supervised on a regular basis, and given the opportunity to participate in discussions about safeguarding issues for example in meetings, informal discussions and/or through considering case studies.
* Periodic review of programmes and projects is conducted to identify new or potential risk and child protection concerns.

1. **AGREEMENT WITH OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS.**

While making an agreement with an organization it should be predetermined whether partner organization will be in direct contact with children. If yes, then determine whether partner organization has its own child protection policy. If the partner organization has its own child protection policy then ACRI should review it to see if it’s in accordance to the child protection policy of ACRI. It should be ensured that there is a clause of commitment with the partners own child protection policy. If the partner organization doesn’t have its own child protection policy then ACRI will ask the partner to review its Child Protection policy and make it a requirement that all staff or volunteers implementing or participating in ACRI programs and activities abide by our Policy. The partnership agreement should include a clause stating that: “both parties are responsible for ensuring all of their staff and volunteers implementing or participating in ACRI programs and activities agree to adhere to ACRI Child Protection Policy. Failure to comply with the Child Protection Policy is a breach of agreement and could subject the individual or organization to legal action.15”

Individuals or organizations requesting the use of the Baseline Research’s resources such as photographs should be required to sign an agreement with the Baseline Research Team as to the proper use of such materials. Furthermore, failure to adhere to the agreed use of the material will result in the immediate termination of the organization’s permission to use the subject materials and/or require immediate return of all materials (including any copies made) provided by the Baseline research.

1. **REPORTING INCIDENTS**

In accordance to its Whistleblowing policy - establishing the right and duty of every Advancing Community Resilience Initiative staff member to report any known or suspected violation of Advancing Community Resilience Initiative Code of Conduct, key values and policies. Advancing Community Resilience Initiative CS Policy regulates the reporting process of child protection concerns.

Policy addressees have the duty to report any violation of Advancing Community Resilience Initiative CS Policy or any situation in which children may be or are at risk of abuse and actions that they become aware of work during their job activities and/or during the execution of their duties and/or during their relationships with Advancing Community Resilience Initiative.

It is also responsibility of Advancing Community Resilience Initiative to set up and duly communicate, in all Countries where it operates, proper feedback and complaint handling mechanisms to allow communities involved in Advancing Community Resilience Initiative’s activities/projects and programmes to report child safe- guarding concerns.

Country procedures shall set the following:

* Define reporters: staff, beneficiaries and other specified stakeholders having the duty/right to file a complaint and their right to confidentiality and non-retaliation;
* Specify purpose, parameters and limitation of the procedure (see Definitions section for guidance on what constitutes abuse);
* Define reporting timeframe, to guarantee the rapid activation of responsible persons and the prompt start of investigation aimed at securing the child. Reporting shall be done within 24 hours from the moment the incidents happens or the concern arises, or from when the reporter be- comes aware of it;
* Define reporting mechanisms, including formats and entry points accessible both by external and internal reports. For external reporters, multiple entry points (free-toll phone, complaints boxes, info points, mail etc.) shall be planned to ensure complaining is appropriate for, accessible to and understood by all relevant groups of adults and children;
* Define reporting flowchart: child safeguarding roles and responsibilities are assigned to all staff according to HQ/Country office/projects organizational charts. As general rule, the first line reporting is the person in charge of the local Child Safeguarding Focal Point (CSFP). If the CSFP is out of office, the line manager is the first reporting line, unless he/she is the alleged perpetrator.

Any local CSFP who receives a report of any allegation of a violation of the Policy or child abuse must immediately forward the Incident Report to the HQ CSFP;

Define procedures to properly store all documentation to ensure protection of data. Exact copy of the whole documentation shall be sent to HQ.

If a child discloses abuse to you about him/herself, it is important that you are prepared with knowledge and skills to handle the situation in the appropriate manner and then report it to you. Children are most likely to share incidences of abuse with the people who they feel comfortable with and trust in their lives. ACRI team Members who are usually in contact with children need to be prepared for children to confide in them.

1. **HOW TO DEAL WITH DISCLOSURE FROM CHILDREN**

Children can directly report concerns, abusive behaviour or threatening situations they found themselves involved into. Any person getting in contact with a child disclosing such feelings and information shall take such disclosure seriously and behave to avoid further stress on the child. He/she shall:

* Listen to the child without pushing him/her during his/her report with the aim of obtaining information. It is important to let the child take his/her time;
* As soon as possible, seek the support of internal/external experts specialized in providing psychological or psychosocial support to children, with particular attention to gender;
* Inform the child about the procedure that will be followed including who is the people the information will be shared with in a simple and transparent way. Tell the child when he/she is expected to receive a feedback and how;
* Report carefully in the Incident Report form what reported by the child, carefully avoiding bias;
* Take immediate action if a reasonable doubt raises that the situation poses a threat to children security and safety, also involving other services to whom refer the case.
* In case further investigation is needed, avoid asking the child to tell about the incident again and again. The best thing is to identify a person who has the right tools to collect the complete information from the child at once. This person will then report to the others involved in the case management
* No child should be put at more risk by any action you take safety and welfare of the child will always come first.
* Establish an environment where children can express their feelings and talk about their experiences openly.
* Accept what the child says as children often fear that they will not be believed.
* Keep calm. Do not act surprised and do not panic.
* Take what the child says seriously, even if it involves someone you feel sure would not harm them. Never promise confidentiality.
* If a child asks you to keep a secret tell them that you would like to keep their secret, but that you may have to share it with someone who can help make sure they are safe.
* Ask the child if she/he has found any safe spaces to go to avoid abuse, and encourage him/ her to go to these places. If possible, share other suggestions that may work.
* Make sure the child understands that the abuse is not their fault and is not okay.
* Try to end the conversation on a positive note of encouragement and hope. Say to the child that she/he has taken a huge step forward in taking control over his/her own life.
* Once you are no longer with the child, write down what the child has told you using the records must be detailed and accurate.
* Immediately submit your report of all witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of the Child Protection Policy to the designated Child Protection Officer, who will record and act on these in a confidential manner in accordance with the standardized process developed by ACRI
* ACRI will take appropriate action to protect the child/children in question from further harm and others in the organization during and following an incident or allegation.
* If you do not feel comfortable reporting the incident directly to your manager you can report anonymously to our anonymous reporting system.
* The relevant contact details for child protection services, local social services department, police, emergency medical help and help lines, will also be readily available and easily accessible.

1. **CODE OF CONDUCT.**

This Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behavior of ACRI employees, interns, volunteers and partners towards children.

* Confidentiality

Personal information of a child should be kept confidential and should only be shared with people within Baseline Research team. Findings from the research should not be disclosed to anyone outside the team.

* Informed Consent

To the greatest extent possible, the Baseline Research should acquire informed consent or the permission of the child, child’s guardian and/or NGO responsible for the child in order to use the image for publicity, fundraising, awareness-raising or other purpose which should be made clear to the consent-giver.

* Responsible for Reporting:

If an ACRI worker is suspected to have abused or harmed or if a child trusts an ACRI member to disclose episodes of abuse inflicted by a relative or other member of community, it is the responsibility of that ACRI worker to report on immediate basis.

* Respect and Dignity

It is the fundamental right of every human being to be given due respect. Therefore it is essential to treat every child with respect and encourage children’s voices and views. The child should be accurately represented through both words and images. Childs image should neither be manipulated nor should it be sensationalized in any way. Sufficient information should be provided where possible as to their social, cultural and economic environment. Even if the children are victims of a calamity or disaster, the preservation of the child’s dignity must nevertheless be preserved at all times.

Avoid discrimination of any kind and use of language and images that could possibly degrade, victimize or shame children. Do not Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a child. Do not Use language that will mentally or emotionally abuse any child.

* Peer Pressure

Be aware of the potential for peer abuse (e.g. children bullying, discriminating against, victimizing or abusing children). Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse. Do not allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other. Do not stand aside when they see inappropriate actions inflicted by children on other children because it is frequent and commonplace.

* Develop standards for Physical safety

Develop clear rules to address specific physical safety issues relative to the local physical environment during a project. For example projects based near water, heavy road traffic, and railway lines.

* Avoid physical contact

Avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position when meeting with children. Avoid being alone with a child in a situation which may lead to misinterpretation. Immediately report the circumstances of any situation which occurs which may be subject to misinterpretation to the designated Child Protection Officer. Do not hit or otherwise physically assault a child. Do not develop a sexual relationship with a child. Do not Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. Report suspected or alleged abuse to the designated Child Protection Officer.

1. **GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY**

The employees should avoid taking pictures out of context (e.g. pictures should be accompanied by an explanatory caption where possible).

* Clothing; in images that are taken, children should be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate.
* Always ask permission from the child / children themselves before taking photographs or moving images except under exceptional circumstances, based on the child / children’s best interests, where this might not be possible or desirable.

1. **IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

Child protection is not just about reading and signing a piece of paper: the policy sets out guidelines and standards that must be put into practice. These include, amongst other measures: recruitment procedures, review of management structures, creation of a space for children to speak out, staff training, and development of transparent protocols. ‘Above all, it must be remembered that it is the children, not the standards, that are revered; and although abuse must never be tolerated, the standards are no more than a tool in the service of promoting the welfare of children.’

1. **RAMIFICATIONS OF MISCONDUCT**

We will immediately suspend any employee, adviser, consultant, trustee, intern or volunteer who is alleged to have violated the Child Protection Policy, pending the outcome of an investigation. On every case of suspicion reported against an ACRI employee it will be mandatory to have an investigation. An internal formal investigation will always occur if the suspected perpetrator of abuse is an ACRI employee, volunteer, consultant or representative. The investigation will include interviews with the suspected perpetrator, the reporter of abuse (the organization will make every effort to keep the reporter’s identity confidential in this process), the child and witnesses. Further investigation will vary depending on the countries local reporting structure. If the suspected perpetrator of abuse in a community member or employee from a partner organization who is not a team member then local reporting procedures for each country will be executed. Formal investigations will occur when necessary. ACRI reserves the right to take any disciplinary action against any of the above who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to the police.

1. **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Following are some FAQs about Reporting Child Abuse and other forms of Violence against children;

1. Who can I speak to about a concern of child abuse and other forms of violence against children?

ACRI Team Members should speak to ACRI Managers and/or the Child Protection Focal Person about concerns of abuse and other forms of violence.

1. Who can I NOT discuss the concern with?

Do not discuss your concern with ACRI Team Members or community members who are not ACRI Managers or Child Protection Focal Persons or who are not directly involved or who did not witness the incident or disclosure. Confidentiality is very important. Only discuss the matter with those necessary to protect the child, do not share unnecessary details.

1. What should I do if a child tells me that she/he has already reported the concern to ACRI? Should I report it again?

Yes. Every time you have a concern, regardless of whether you or someone else has already reported it, you should report it.

1. What happens after I report the concern? Who will manage it? Who will be involved?

If you report the incident to your manager, your manager will address the situation. If the perpetrator is an ACRI Team Member, ACRI protocol will be followed. If a team member has abused or harmed a child they will be dismissed from the organization. If it is an individual from a partner organization the partnership procedure will be adhered to. If it is an individual external to ACRI than your countries local procedure will be followed. In all situations ACRI will refer the case to a Child Protection organization or service in their community that can best support the child.

1. What if I have a suspicion but am not sure if the child is really being abused?

When in doubt, it is better to report a case and be wrong, than not to report and have the child continue being abused.

1. What will happen to the child/family involved?

This will vary on a case by case basis. Actions will be taken to meet the best interests of the child and ensure their safety.

1. What happens if my concern does not end up being valid?

If a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is made and it proves to be untrue on investigation, no action will be taken against the person who reported it. However if a report is made and it is based on false and malicious accusations, the reporter will face disciplinary action.

1. After reporting the incident, should/can I speak to the child about the reporting process and next steps?

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you it is important to tell them the next steps you will be taking to respond to their disclosure. Remember, the child has confided in you because they trust you. You should maintain an honest relationship with the child.

1. Will criminal charges be laid against the person involved in abusing the child?

This will vary on a case by case basis depending on the severity of the abuse.

**Annex 1.**

**DECLARATION FORM.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practice while associated with ACRI. I further understand that adherence to the ACRI’s Child Protection Policy will involve the following: undergoing a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau; signing a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including those considered ‘spent’; declaring any previous investigations or allegations made against me with respect to child protection issues; and providing two character references.

Please provide the name, address and contact number of two character references you have known for no less than 2 years, excluding family members.

1. Referee Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Referee Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, please provide details of all criminal convictions, including those considered ‘spent’, and declare any previous investigations or allegations made against you. These will be kept confidential by ACRI. I understand that failure to comply with the Child Protection Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including termination of my contract.

(Print name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Job title/role) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Annex 2.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

All Incident Reports must be stored securely

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **INCIDENT REPORT** | |
| **Name and position of the person making the report** |  |
| **Report Date** |  |
| **Country** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Please categorize the incident** | | | | | | |
| Physical injure | Physical violence | Sexual offence | | Emotional or psychological abuse | Serious neglect | Other (please specify) |
| **Incident details** | | | | | | |
| Date of incident | | |  | | | |
| Time of incident | | |  | | | |
| Location of incident | | |  | | | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved | | |  | | | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved (please specify if  belonging to a partner organization) | | |  | | | |
| **Referral details** | | | | | | |
| Date of referral | | |  | | | |
| Time of referral | | |  | | | |
| Location | | |  | | | |
| Name(s) of the referrer | | |  | | | |
| Address of the referrer | | |  | | | |
| Contact of the referrer | | |  | | | |
| Relationship with child | | |  | | | |
| **Child details (if available)** | | | | | | |
| Name | | |  | | | |
| Date of birth/age | | |  | | | |
| Gender | | |  | | | |
| Address | | |  | | | |
| Language spoken | | |  | | | |
| Any disability | | |  | | | |
| Status/whose legal responsibility | | |  | | | |
| **Please describe the incident (including child’s words if possible)** | | | | | | |
| When did it take place? | | |  | | | |
| Who was involved? | | |  | | | |
| Who was there? | | |  | | | |