

Evidence

Action

Global Child Protection Policy

Global Child Protection Policy	Policy Effective Date: 23 October 2019
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	Department of Origin: Legal
	Policy Number: LG.G.04

A. Purpose

As a non-profit charity operating internationally, Evidence Action is committed to promoting the rights of the children including the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation.

Evidence Action takes active measures to ensure children's right to protection are fully realized. Evidence Action's expectation is that its management, employees, partners, sub contractors, consultants and others who work with Evidence Action have children's best interest at heart.

This Global Child Protection Policy is Evidence Action's statement of intent demonstrating its commitment to safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation and makes clear to everyone in the organization, and all stakeholders who come into contact with Evidence Action, what is required in relation to the protection of children and that child abuse or exploitation in any form is unacceptable to Evidence Action.

In all Evidence Action programs and activities, we aim to create 'child safe' environments, both internally and externally, where children are respected, protected, empowered and active in their own protection, and where staff are skilled, confident, competent and well supported in meeting their protection responsibilities.

This Global Child Protection Policy has been adopted by Evidence Action as the official policy for Evidence Action applicable to its worldwide activities. Where a country-specific policy has been or will be adopted, it will follow the principles and spirit of this global policy and will be adapted to comply with local laws and practices.

B. Guiding Principles

Evidence Action believes that all children have a right to be safe at all times and we have an obligation to provide child safe and child friendly environments and programs.

All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background.

Evidence Action has a duty of care to all children that we work for in all our offices.

All children should be protected against discrimination in treatment or otherwise, irrespective of child's caste, race, socio-economic status, sex, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability or any other factor.

C. Scope

This policy applies to Evidence Action management staff, interns and volunteers as well as consultants, partners, sub-contractors and independent contractors who come into contact with children as a result of their work for or with Evidence Action.

D. Definitions

A Child: Every human being under the age of eighteen years.

Child Protection: The responsibilities, measures and activities that Evidence Action undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional abuse or exploitation.

Child Abuse: All forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, trafficking, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

In addition, Child Abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm to a child. Child Abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

E. Responsibilities under this Child Protection Policy

It is the responsibility of the Evidence Action management to ensure that all Evidence Action participants in their area of responsibility are aware of and agree to abide by this policy. Evidence Action will conduct appropriate risk assessments of its programs, projects and locations to provide a safe and inclusive environment for the children we support and will conduct criminal record and reference checks for staff that come into regular contact with children. Where Evidence Action has implemented a country-specific Child Protection Policy, the country lead is responsible for ensuring all participants are made aware of and follow the applicable country-specific policy.

Evidence Action management staff, interns and volunteers as well as consultants, partners, sub-contractors and independent contractors who come into contact with children as a result of their work for or with Evidence Action, must:

- Be made aware of this policy, and receive training as appropriate.
- Take any action or refrain from acting in a way that would put a child at risk of potential Child Abuse, by that person or others.
- Report any Child Abuse concerns. This is a mandatory requirement and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. All reports must be submitted in the manner described below. There may also be legal obligations to report suspected or actual Child Abuse to law enforcement or other governmental authorities.

- Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures including reporting to law enforcement authorities as applicable.
- Cooperate honestly, fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child Abuse.
- Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights in an honest and confidential manner.
- Always ask permission from children (or their parents/guardian for young children) before taking images (e.g., photograph, video) of them. Respect their decision to say no to having an image taken. Ensure that any images taken of children are respectful (e.g., children should be appropriately clothed and images taken should not be sexually suggestive or in any way impact negatively on their dignity or privacy). Stories and images of children should be based on the child's best interest.
- Be aware that where concerns exist about the conduct of staff, consultants, independent contractors, sub-contractors or others in relation to child protection and/or where there has been a breach of this Global Child Protection Policy, Evidence Action will undertake an investigation in accordance with this Global Child Protection Policy or if required by applicable law. This may result in disciplinary sanctions and/or dismissal of staff,
- Be aware that Evidence Action will sever all relations with any Evidence Action partner, sub-contractor, independent contractor or others who are proven to have committed Child Abuse.
- No child is to be employed in any of the office premises of Evidence Action nor is Evidence Action to deal/trade with vendors or suppliers which employ a child for any purpose or in any manner.
- Be aware that if legitimate concerns about suspected Child Abuse are raised which proves to be unfounded upon investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, any employee who makes false and malicious accusation could face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal.
- Be aware that Evidence Action may take appropriate legal or other action against Evidence Action management staff, interns and volunteers as well as consultants, partners, sub-contractors and independent contractors or others who make false accusations of Child Abuse.
- All senior leadership including regional and country leads must ensure that each Evidence Action office has implemented this Global Child Protection Policy or has implemented a consistent, country-specific policy. Local advisors and experts may be consulted to ensure compliance with applicable law or other legal requirements.
- Maintain appropriate and necessary records of any reports of Child Abuse and response, including any investigation.

F. Reporting Procedures

Any allegations of actual or suspected Child Abuse are to be reported internally as follows:

- Evidence Action's CEO will designate a member of staff as the child protection contact to receive any reports. The child protection contact will communicate the allegations to Evidence Action's senior leadership, including the CEO, Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, Chief People Officer and Chief Legal Officer, if any. Any decision to initiate a formal

investigation is to be made by this group of senior leadership.

- The relevant child protection contact will be identified to all staff, and where applicable to sub-contractors, consultants, partners and others.
- All allegations or suspected allegations of Child Abuse must be reported to the designated child protection contact. Reports must be submitted to the relevant child protection contact within no more than 24 hours of becoming aware of the allegations.
- Reports may be submitted anonymously.
- All reported allegations will be treated as confidential information and disclosed only to persons or organizations on a need-to-know basis.
- Persons submitting reports in good faith will not be subject to any form of retaliation, even if the allegations subsequently cannot be substantiated.
- Where allegations of Child Abuse are made about Evidence Action leadership, staff, consultants or others, that individual may be immediately suspended during any resulting investigation. Should the allegations be substantiated, the individual will be subject to potential disciplinary action, including possible termination.

G. Personal Conduct

Evidence Action is committed to ensuring that our leadership, staff, partners and consultants apply high standards of behavior toward children within both their professional and their personal lives. Unlawful or other conduct, whether or not constituting Child Abuse, by Evidence Action leadership, staff, partners and consultants which jeopardizes its reputation or position, whether during or after business hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse; sexual harassment; possession of child pornography; physically or verbally abusive behavior, public disorderly conduct or other unlawful activity.

The leadership, staff, partners and consultants must bear in mind the principles and requirements of this Global Child Protection Policy in both their professional and personal activities and how these activities could be perceived within and outside of Evidence Action.