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Registered in the National Register of Cooperatives with Prevalent Mutuality under n. A115539

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

E.R.I.C.A. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

E.R.I.C.A. supports the protection of children's rights and is directly committed to actions aimed at protecting their health, well-being and safety.

This child protection policy refers to the protection of children and adolescents as defined by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and applies to all children, excluding and opposing all forms of discrimination, racism and inequality.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy is:

- ensure that the organisation's projects, its employees or other persons working with or on behalf of E.R.I.C.A. do not harm children
- ensure that child safety risks and instances of misconduct are identified, reported and addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.

SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The child protection policy of E.R.I.C.A. covers:

1. All E.R.I.C.A. workers..
2. Visitors.
3. Sub-contractors, suppliers/sub-contractors and implementing partners who have direct contact with children through projects implemented or financially supported by E.R.I.C.A.

DEFINITIONS

Child - For the purposes of this policy, the term "child" refers to anyone under the age of eighteen

years, in accordance with Article 1 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Child beneficiary - For the purposes of this policy, the term "child beneficiary" refers to all children who benefit from or come into contact with projects implemented or funded by E.R.I.C.A..

Child Abuse and Exploitation - For the purposes of this policy, "child abuse" and "child exploitation" mean any form of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, carelessness or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Harm - For the purposes of this policy, "harm" refers to physical or psychological injury or damage to a child's health, survival, development or dignity.

Suppliers/subcontractors - For the purposes of this policy, "suppliers/subcontractors" refers to individuals, companies or organisations with whom E.R.I.C.A. has a contractual relationship for the supply of goods or services.

Sub-contractors - For the purposes of this policy, "sub-contractors" refers to organisations to which financial assistance is awarded under a grant by E.R.I.C.A., when the latter is the grant holder (main beneficiary).

Implementing partners - For the purposes of this policy, "implementing partners" means public and private entities, other than subcontractors or suppliers/subcontractors, with which E.R.I.C.A. has a contractual agreement or memorandum of understanding for the purpose of project implementation.

Workers of E.R.I.C.A. - For the purposes of this policy, the term "worker of E.R.I.C.A." refers to employees, fellows and interns, incentive workers, volunteers, contract workers, consultants and independent contractors.

Visitors - For the purposes of this policy, "visitors" refers to individuals hosted by E.R.I.C.A., who visit projects implemented or financially supported by E.R.I.C.A. and are not E.R.I.C.A. workers, or other persons involved in the implementation of the project. It includes journalists, photographers, members of the executive committee and donors.

POLICY

In accordance with Article 19 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, E.R.I.C.A. recognises the right of all children to be protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation and, in accordance with Article 3, all actions relating to the protection of children must be undertaken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

E.R.I.C.A. also recognises its responsibility to ensure that its projects, workers and other persons working with or on behalf of E.R.I.C.A. do not harm children.

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that its organisational policies, protocol, procedures and actions reflect its commitment to fulfilling this responsibility.

Standards of Professional Conduct

1. Zero Tolerance

E.R.I.C.A. has a zero tolerance policy regarding the abuse and exploitation of children. E.R.I.C.A. workers, visitors, subcontractors, suppliers/subcontractors and implementation partners are prohibited from any conduct involving the abuse or exploitation of children.

2. Recruitment

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that its workers are fit to work with children and are informed of their responsibility to uphold and respect E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy.

- 2.1 As part of the recruitment process for every position at E.R.I.C.A., including those involving direct contact with children, and for both internal employees and external applicants, everyone is required to undergo a documented reference check. References may not be family members or relatives and, in the case of several references, at least one must be a former supervisor; for internal employees, the current supervisor must also serve as a reference.
- 2.2 Whenever legally permissible and possible, criminal background checks, including police and/or criminal record checks, and/or other additional checks shall be conducted before a job offer is extended.
- 2.3 Interviews with applicants for education, health and protection and other positions involving direct contact with children shall include appropriate questions on child protection.
- 2.4 Job advertisements, job descriptions, terms of reference, staff employment manuals and policies, orientation materials, contracts and employment agreements for new and returning workers include the responsibility to comply with E.R.I.C.A. policies, including E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy.

3. Behavioural Protocol

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that its workers, visitors, suppliers/subcontractors and implementation partners behave in a child-safe manner.

- 3.1 E.R.I.C.A. workers are required to comply with the behavioural protocol outlined below
 - 3.1.1 E.R.I.C.A. workers must not:
 - a. Physically punish or discipline child beneficiaries.
 - b. Make children do things of an intimate and personal nature that they can do themselves.
 - c. Act in such a way as to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
 - d. Engage in sexual activities with children regardless of age, consent, location. Misconception of the age of the child is not a defence.
 - e. Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or demeaning.

- f. Invite child beneficiaries into their home unless the supervisor has agreed that this is necessary for the protection of the child.
 - g. Sleep in the same bed or room as a child beneficiary. If it is necessary to sleep in the same room, ensure that another adult is present and that the supervisor's permission has been obtained.
 - h. Discriminate, showing differential treatment or favouring particular children to the exclusion of others.
 - i. Hire children for domestic or other work, regardless of national labour laws; it is inappropriate given their age or stage of development, interferes with their education or recreational activities, or exposes them to a significant risk of injury.
 - j. Develop relationships with children that could in any way be considered inappropriate, exploitative or abusive.
 - k. Use computers, mobile phones, video cameras or social media to harass children.
 - l. Access child pornography through any means.
- 3.1.2 E.R.I.C.A. workers must:
- a. Ensure, where possible, that when working with individual children, another adult is present.
 - b. Ensure that images taken of children (e.g. photographs and videos) are accurate and respect children's privacy and dignity, following E.R.I.C.A. communication guidelines. Children must be appropriately dressed in images. Sexually suggestive poses are prohibited.
 - c. Obtain informed consent from children and those with parental responsibility or legal guardianship before photographing them, except in exceptional circumstances where this is not possible or not in the best interests of the child. Where possible and appropriate, this consent should be in writing and the children and their carers should be informed of how the images will be used.
 - d. Limit the use of images of child beneficiaries to professional, respectful, awareness-raising, fundraising, advertising and programmatic purposes.
 - e. Ensure that any images or videos of a child do not put them at risk or make them vulnerable to any form of abuse.
 - f. Respect confidentiality principles, follow data protection protocol and share children's personal information only when necessary.
 - g. Make every effort to minimise the risk of harm to child beneficiaries.
 - h. Immediately report suspicions or allegations of child abuse or exploitation or non-compliance with policy.
- 3.1.3 E.R.I.C.A. ensures that its employees are informed of their obligation to comply with the above-mentioned behavioural protocol.

- 3.1.4 E.R.I.C.A. informs visitors about E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy. Where appropriate, and if visitors are in direct contact with children, visitors shall be provided with a document specifying E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy and the obligation to comply with it.
- 3.1.5 Contracts, agreements and memoranda of understanding must include the requirement that sub-contractors, suppliers/sub-contractors and implementation partners do not engage in any form of child abuse or exploitation.
- 3.1.6 Sub-contractors and implementing partners who have direct contact with children through projects implemented or financially supported by E.R.I.C.A. must agree in writing to ensure that, during their association with E.R.I.C.A., they and their representatives comply with the behavioural protocol outlined in this policy.

4. Training

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that its workers have the necessary knowledge to know and respect E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy.

- 4.1 E.R.I.C.A. shall include information on E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy in E.R.I.C.A.'s training and orientation materials.
- 4.2 E.R.I.C.A. shall provide a basic orientation on this policy and its requirements to new employees of E.R.I.C.A. as part of the orientation and to its employees.
- 4.3 E.R.I.C.A. shall provide specialised training, as required, to E.R.I.C.A. workers, including, but not limited to: human resources officers; supervisors and managers; technical specialists and co-workers engaged in communication, media and data collection and information management activities.

5. Communication

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that children's representations - words and images - protect their identity and respect their dignity and rights.

- 5.1 The following standards should guide E.R.I.C.A.'s communications about children:
 - 5.1.1 Depictions of children must respect children's privacy and present them in a respectful and dignified manner.
 - 5.1.2 Children must be appropriately dressed in images. Sexually suggestive poses are not permitted.
 - 5.1.3 Informed consent must be obtained from children and those exercising parental responsibility or legal guardianship before photographing them. When possible and appropriate, this consent shall be in writing and the children and their caregivers shall be informed of how the images will be used.

- 5.1.4 Use of images of child beneficiaries must be limited to professional, respectful, awareness-raising, fundraising, advertising and programmatic purposes.
- 5.1.5 Care must be taken to ensure that no image or recorded history of a child places the child at risk or makes the child vulnerable to any form of abuse.
- 5.2 E.R.I.C.A. shall ensure that communication staff who coordinate the collection of images/videos follow E.R.I.C.A. communication guidelines, including explaining the guidelines to journalists, photographers and visitors to E.R.I.C.A. projects, as appropriate.

6. Safety, security and dignity

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that no harm, intentional or unintentional, is caused to children as a result of E.R.I.C.A. projects or operations:

- 6.1 Ensuring that E.R.I.C.A. workers are prepared to address the safety needs of child beneficiaries in the event of an accident or other harmful event.
 - 1.6.1 Where E.R.I.C.A. programmes include children, the risk assessment and management plans must include child protection considerations.
 - 1.6.2 Where E.R.I.C.A. programmes include children, a list of relevant health and protective services to refer to must be maintained.
 - 1.6.3 Where E.R.I.C.A. has direct responsibility for running activities for children, children must be adequately supervised at all times.
- 6.2 E.R.I.C.A. workers must, where possible, ensure that proposals demonstrate that risks that children may face as a result of a project have been identified and addressed, and will be monitored.
- 6.3 In order to ensure that no harm is caused to children as a result of the collection or archiving of their personal information, E.R.I.C.A. workers must adhere to the following data protection protocol:
 - 6.3.1 Before collecting personal information from a child, E.R.I.C.A. workers must identify and take steps to address potential risks related to the collection and archiving of children's data.
 - 6.3.2 Before collecting personal information from a child, E.R.I.C.A. workers must explain to the child what information will be collected and how it will be used and stored.
 - 6.3.3 Informed consent must be obtained from the child's parent or legal guardian before collecting or sharing information.
 - 6.3.4 E.R.I.C.A. staff should only collect information that is necessary and/or that the child wishes to provide.
 - 6.3.5 Information gathered about children should only be shared with others on a need-to-know basis and should only be shared when it is in the best interest of the child.

6.3.6 Information collected about children must be stored in a manner that complies with Standard 5 of the Minimum Standards for the Protection of Children in Humanitarian Contexts.

7. Reporting, investigation and response

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to ensuring that allegations of violations of the child protection policy are reported, investigated and responded to in a timely, fair, transparent and consistent manner.

- 7.1 Beneficiaries must be informed of E.R.I.C.A.'s commitments to the children of this policy and must be informed of how to report suspected violations of these commitments.
- 7.2 Employees of E.R.I.C.A. are required to report suspected violations directly to the head of personnel.
- 7.3 Investigations of violations of the child protection policy must be carried out in conformity with the procedures set out in E.R.I.C.A.'s code of conduct.
- 7.4 Children and their families affected by violations of the child protection policy must receive timely and appropriate support, appropriate to the child's age and development and gender-sensitive.
- 7.5 Non-compliance with the child protection policy by E.R.I.C.A. employees is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or contract.
- 7.6 Sub-contractors, suppliers/sub-contractors and implementing partners who have direct contact with children must be informed of the reporting routes for violations of the behavioural protocol outlined in this policy, or must agree on other reporting procedures.
- 7.7 Violations of child protection expectations outlined in contracts, agreements or memoranda of understanding with subcontractors, suppliers/subcontractors or implementation partners are grounds for termination of the contract or agreement. This must be included in contracts and agreements.

8. Management

E.R.I.C.A. is committed to putting in place a clearly defined management structure to ensure coordinated and consistent implementation and control of this policy throughout the organisation.

- 8.1 The E.R.I.C.A. Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the implementation and control of E.R.I.C.A.'s policies, including the coordinated implementation and control of the child protection policy.

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- 8.1.1 Responding to reports of child exploitation and abuse and non-compliance with this policy.
- 8.1.2 Monitoring the implementation of and compliance with this policy.
- 8.1.3 Ensure that E.R.I.C.A. employees receive information on the policy through the training

and orientation provided on E.R.I.C.A. policies.

- 8.1.4 Review the policy annually where necessary.
- 8.1.5 Provide supervision and support to the General Secretariat and those responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy.
- 8.2 The General Secretariat, human resources and others responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy shall, in particular:
 - 8.2.1 Ensure that E.R.I.C.A. employees are trained on its policies including this child protection policy and are aware of their responsibilities in relation to these policies.
 - 8.2.2 Ensure that E.R.I.C.A. personnel understand how to report and respond to allegations of exploitation or abuse, including of children.
- 8.3 In general, area/network managers are responsible for:
 - 8.3.1 Ensuring that workers under their supervision comply with E.R.I.C.A. policies, including this child protection policy.
 - 8.3.2 Ensuring that E.R.I.C.A. personnel know how to report and respond to allegations of exploitation or abuse, including against children.

9. REVIEW

E.R.I.C.A.'s child protection policy is subject to annual review, where necessary, by the Board of Directors.

10. CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Board of Directors by forwarding your request to amministrazione@coperica.it

Alba, 10th January 2024

the legal representative

Roberto Cavallo

