



TERRE DES HOMMES ITALY CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
(ADOPTED BY THE BOARD ON THE 14th December 2012)

Terre des Hommes Italy is a non discriminating nongovernmental organization that works for the protection of children's rights.

TDH – I is member of the International Terre des hommes Federation working on the basis of its Charter.

TDH – I's mission is the protection of children at risk of harm, as well as the prevention of any form of abuse, violence and exploitation.

Together with interventions aimed at helping **children** in distress, abandoned or victims of abuses, TDH-I supports programs of **emergency relief** and **sustainable development** in the field of health, education, vocational training, women promotion, agriculture, rural development, fisheries & sea-farming, community-based management of natural resources, strengthening of local micro-enterprises, micro-credit.

Beside its action in developing countries TDH – I undertakes a strong advocacy work at national as well as at European level to positively impact on the legislative framework on children's rights.

Being aware that the risk of child abuse – in all its forms – may occur everywhere, in any context, TDH – I finds it essential to set forth in a Child Protection Policy document common the principles, rules and procedures that make children beneficiaries of its projects feel always safe and enable the Foundation to promptly react to any kind of violence against a child.

Art.3 of the CRC Convention is the inspiring principle of TDH – I Child Protection Policy: the superior interest of the child must guide any and every choice and action of the Foundation.

The present CPP consequently aims at defining minimum standards to ensure well being and safety of children beneficiaries of TDH – I field projects.

The CPP document is the following:

- a) a first step to harmonize the approach and work of TDH – I in the field, with regard to the well being and safety of children beneficiaries of its interventions
- b) a starting point for making partners aware of the need of ensuring an open and safe approach in dealing with children
- c) a part of the MOU / partnership agreement that TDH – I signs with local partners
- d) it is binding for the partners (not acting in accordance to the CPP of TDH – I is a good reason for automatic rescission of the MOU / partnership agreement). (see TDH – I MOU standard form)

The CPP together with the Code of Conduct represents the two TDH – I referring documents aiming at ensuring the high commitment of TDH – I in protecting children beneficiaries of its action under any circumstances.

The Code of Conduct: summarizes all the values and principles that TDH – I staff, donors, volunteers, consultants, visitors, service suppliers must respect in their daily work with the Foundation.

The CPP establishes practical common base principles and rules to ensure the safety and well being of children who benefit from TDH – I field work. The document aims to ensure the safety of all children beneficiaries of a TDH – I project and to prevent all forms of possible abuse from TDH – I or partners' staff.

Moreover the CPP supplies the Foundation with ad hoc simple and clear procedures to refer to in order to prevent child abuses and react promptly should an abuse occur to one of the children beneficiaries of TDH – I projects.

What is 'child abuse'?

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 'abuse' TDH – I intends to prevent can be defined as follows:

Child abuse

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes 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.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be a single or repeated incidents.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Neglect and negligent treatment

Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is 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 and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Sexual abuse may include but is not limited to:

- The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity.
- The exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices.
- The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Exploitation

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical, mental health, education, spiritual, moral and social-emotional development.

Terre des Hommes Italy considers all forms of child abuse unacceptable and through the adoption of the following measures wishes to do its best to prevent them.

BASIC PROCEDURES REQUIRED BY TDH – I CPP

The Foundation has officially adopted a Code of Conduct that describes the collaborators and partners' proper behavior. The Code of Conduct is crucial to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children beneficiaries of its projects. (see Doc §1 Code of Conduct).

The Code of Conduct is binding for TDH – I staff as well as all for all the people within the projects, with no exception.

MOU

Both CPP and Code of Conduct are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic and must be included in the MOU signed by TDH – I and its partners.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Minimum standard requirements for staff and partners' behavior

The Code of Conduct is an agreement signed by TDH – I and its staff, its partners and visitors as well as all people getting in contact with the children involved in the projects.

The Code describes a behavior model that TDH – I finds appropriate to build a relationship between adults and children.

- TDH – I staff, partners and visitors getting in contact with children, are required to:
 - a. Treat them respectfully always recognizing them as rights holders
 - b. Never violate their rights
 - c. Approach to children according to their context
 - d. Work with children on the base of a mutual relationship of respect and confidence
 - e. Promote and stimulate children's abilities and potential
 - f. Take children's point of view in high consideration and respect their opinion
 - g. Make children always aware of their rights
 - h. Take care of children's environment ensuring their safety and wellbeing
 - i. Encourage children to express themselves freely
 - j. Never isolate yourself with a child
 - k. Make sure that there is a witness when working with children
 - l. Avoid any ambiguous situation that may put him/her at risk of denounce
 - m. Prevent high risk situations and react promptly in case an abuse may occur

- TDH – I staff, partners and visitors getting in contact with children must avoid to:
 - a. Adopt any corporal punishment
 - b. Humiliate, discriminate children or treat them scornfully
 - c. Have any sexual relation with children
 - d. Behave with children and / or have any physical contact that may be considered inappropriate or lamentable according to their culture
 - e. Organize activities that may put children at risk of abuse
 - f. Build a relationship with children that may represent an abuse or even a form of exploitation
 - g. Use a language or adopt a behavior that can be provocative to children
 - h. Not respect children's privacy
 - i. Be aware or even take part in activities that can put children at risk
 - j. Take pictures or videos that may put children at any risk
 - k. Spend the night together with a child
 - l. Spend too much time exclusively with a single child of the project excluding the others
 - m. Host one of the children of the project at home and exploit him/her in any way (child labor ..).

Should anybody decide not to respect the provisions of the Code of Conduct of TDH – I his/her working relation must be interrupted.

TDH- I staff, partners as well as visitors are always responsible for their behavior , even when it is unintentional.

Adults must always avoid behaviors that can put them at risk of being compromised.

SPECIAL RULES OF CONDUCT

- Sponsor and donors

The sponsorship programme is a big opportunity to help a child and his/her community. Thanks to the SP children, their families and communities have an enriching exchange with donors. The relationship between child and donor is usually indirect and monitored by TDH through ad hoc personnel in charge of verifying all the information circulating between them.

This relationship may seldom be direct and this happens every time a sponsor decides to visit the project to get a deeper understanding of the child's living context.

In such case, to avoid any risk for the child, TDH requires the sponsor to previously sign the CPP to make sure he/she will adopt a proper and fair behavior with the children of the projects and, more generally, complies with the rules of that document.

Should a sponsor not respect the CPP or the Code of Conduct, TDH – I has the right to exclude him/her from the sponsorship programme, to avoid any possible risk for the child of the project.

TDH staff as well as the partner is trained to identify people who can represent a threat to children's well-being.

IMAGES

Images of sponsored children must be previously and expressively authorized by TDH – I.

Data that may help localize children must never circulate on web, social networks nor be available to the public.

Images must always respect children's dignity and never represent them in vulnerable condition.

Children must always be dressed and represented in their daily activities.

EXTERNAL VISITS

Each visit by any external person must be previously planned and organized together with TDH – I.

Should a visitor enter a Center without authorization from the staff, TDH – I or its partner may forbid him/her the access.

Each visitor must be identified before entering a Center even if for a short period.

Giving money to children or heir family is forbidden.

Any exchange of address is forbidden between child and visitor.

Visitors are required to sign a declaration to confirm they have fully understood TDH – I policy on visits and they agree with it.

Authorized images taken by visitors during their visit to the Center can never circulate and must be used for private purpose.

Ad hoc attention must be paid to those visitors who frequently visit the same child.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

To minimize the possibility of children being abused by staff people TDH – I and its partners must include in their recruitment procedures at least:

- Ad hoc questions to check the suitability of working with children are included in staff recruitment procedures at headquarter level as well as in the field.
- At least two suitable references are taken up for all representatives who have regular contacts with children and evidence of identity and any relevant qualifications are seen.

Recruitment contracting as well as evaluation procedures must refer to the CPP and the Code of Conduct as well as to the CRC.

Should a candidate not fulfill the requirements of those documents , TDH – I has the right to reject his/her candidacy.

A) Selection

Collection of references

Individual interview focusing on previous experiences with children

Criminal record

B) Contracting

Training on the Code of Conduct and CPP and signature of both documents

C) Evaluation

Evaluation of staff is implemented according to the provisions of the contract

AWARENESS RAISING AND PREVENTION

To make staff, volunteers, partners and others aware of the problem of child abuse in all its forms TDH – I delegations in the field and/or partner organizations are required to organize ad hoc trainings according to the available resources.

The training must be planned according to time, strategy and available resources of each TDH – I delegation all over the world on the base of their official commitment.

Together with the CPP the training will focus on the Keeping Children Safe Toolkit according to the decision taken by the TDH/GA on November 2010 to officially adopt the KCS among all MOs.

Each delegation is therefore required to sign an official and formal commitment, to be concretized according to the specific context.

Each delegation will provide local staff (TDH – I as well as partners' staff) with ad hoc trainings on that KIT.

The KIT will be adopted at field level according to specific needs of each context.

Should a partner already have a CPP, the document can be tailored and adopted by TDH – I according to its needs.

In any case, in order to establish common minimum standards and procedures to ensure a safe environment for the children in the projects, the following Protection and Reporting procedures are required:

PROTECTION AND REPORTING

To enable TDH – I promptly react in case a child abuse, the following minimum procedures must be adopted at field level and included in the MOU signed by the partner.

(Should the partner already have a CPP or ad hoc reporting procedure, the following measures can be adapted and / or substituted by those of the partner.)

1. Children's rights are clearly reported and available to everyone
2. Children are aware of their right to be safe from abuse
3. Posters and leaflets make clear that behaviors such as bullying, racist language or threatening are unacceptable
4. Children are aware of what child abuse is thanks to ad hoc material that explains it – in a child friendly manner
5. A reference person is clearly identified within the organization and children can refer to him/her easily
6. Children know very well who the reference person is and how to refer to her/him in case of concern
7. The reference person in charge of dealing with complaints must receive ad hoc training in order to adopt appropriate behavior when dealing with children in such confidential way

What to do in case of a report:

- a. Any abuse (suspected or confirmed) must be treated seriously
- b. Any person working for TDH – I has the responsibility to inform his / her chief any time he/she is concerned with children's safety and well-being
- c. A person among TDH – I staff in the field must be in charge of receiving and properly recording any report

In case of suspicion:

- Should a TDH . I member staff witness an abuse
- Suspect an abuse
- Receive a report of abuse

He / she must inform his/her chief and/or the project coordinator.

Should the chief be the person suspected, his/her superior must be informed.

Should a TDH – operator receive a report from a child:

The report must be treated confidentially and seriously

The child must be supported by a psychologist to help him/her explain the facts

The child must be heard according to his/her needs

The child must not be forced nor influenced while giving his/her statement

It is important to make the child aware of the importance of his/her statement

It is important to make the child aware that he/she will probably have to give testimony to others

It is important to make the child aware of the consequences of his/her statement

Soon after having heard the statement it is important to write it down with date and time.

Avoid any contact with the person accused of the abuse

Make the chief /superior aware of the report

Should the chief be the person accused, his/her superior must be informed of the recorded report

Staff must:

Protect the child by giving him/her all the needed psychological, medical, legal support

Protect the person who discovered the abuse

Avoid any contact between the accused person and the children

Inform the project director of the facts

Adopt the required measures according to the decision of the public authority

In order to better adapt the reporting process to every specific context, ad hoc procedures will be defined and agreed by TDH – I field staff and local partner and officially included in their MOU.