



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

SSDO
Sustainable Social Development Organization

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Social Sustainable Development Organization (SSDO) is a research based non-governmental advocacy organization founded and incorporated in 2015 registered under Societies Registration Act 1860. SSDO is working to contribute to the well-being of society for establishing an institutionalized system of social development through emphasizing a responsible citizenship. It is a civil initiative aimed to stimulate public dialogue on policies, inform public action, and activate social regrouping. SSDO was formed with the vision of contributing towards the sustainable and inclusive development of underprivileged communities of marginalized areas of Pakistan.

SSDO plans to play its part in eradicating the issues causing hindrance in development of different segments and groups of the society. SSDO has been working with men, women, children, minorities and other marginalized individuals of the society. The work has been done around different areas of Pakistan covering four provinces; Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. SSDO seeks out for opportunities to implement effective context-based activities setting accountable the concerned personnel and departments. SSDO is enriched with experienced staff holding expertise in different areas to cater diverse issues.

SSDO also holds national secretariat of child rights movements which is network of around 400 national organizations working on child rights across Pakistan. SSDO believes that children's need to be respected and protected. The purpose of the policy is to set minimum standards on child protection and to make sure that SSDO works for the safest possible environment for children.

This policy is in-line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Additionally, it is in-line with National Commission on the Rights of Children Bill, the Charter of Child Rights Bill, the Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill, Rights to Free and Compulsory Education Bill in accordance with Constitution of Pakistan.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all staff, interns, visitors, consultants / resource persons, implementing partners, contractors, suppliers and any other individuals working for or representing SSDO. They are obligated to comply with the terms of this policy as mentioned in their contractual agreement and shall ensure that their employees and sub-contractors do likewise throughout the duration of the contract.

3. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY IN SSDO

3.1. THE ROLE AND DUTY OF SSDO IN CHILD PROTECTION

SSDO staff, by the nature of their work, interacts with vulnerable communities, vulnerable young adults and children and will therefore be aware of sensitive information concerning them. This information may be called upon as evidence in child protection investigations or to inform decision-making. SSDO staff may become aware of infringements of Rights, or, allegations of infringements, or, stories of infringements. Sometimes circumstances and intuition will leave the worker suspecting an infringement of rights.

- Concerns must be reported immediately to the staff line manager who in turn will report to the Child Protection Focal Person of SSDO.
- Whenever a staff member of SSDO hears of abuse or exploitation, detailed notes of circumstances and dialogue must be included in records and kept confidential. These records may be used as evidence to save a child from abuse and exploitation.
- Concerns that are evidenced by impairment of health, physical injury, sexual exploitation, criminal activity or threats must be reported immediately to statutory child protection agencies or equivalent authorities.
- Any knowledge regarding partner/staff prior record of children-based activities which are questionable should be raised with the line manager and the Focal Person.

3.2. THE ROLE AND DUTY OF LINE MANAGERS IN CHILD PROTECTION

- To report and record any incident of concern about child protection to the CP Focal Person.
- Ensure staff is aware of, and provide induction to, as well as have access to Child and Human Rights documents.
- Ensure that staff is aware of procedures for reporting concerns and their responsibilities in reporting. (See section 10)
- Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought for any activity with a child and encourage parental participation in all activities involving children.
- Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought before taking any images or footage of children.
- Ensure that the parent or guardian understands the purpose of this activity and how the images or footage will be used.
- Plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to eliminate risks to children.
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and ensure these are supervised appropriately.
- Ensure that staff is accountable for the welfare of children during SSDO activities.
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists amongst staff to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Ensure that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior by SSDO or partner staff does not go unchallenged.

3.3. THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN IMPLEMENTING CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Ensure this Child Protection policy and procedure is included in the job contracts/agreement/MOU to all new employees and all SSDO stakeholders. As part of the acceptance procedure, employees will be asked to sign a declaration of the policy stating that they are aware of its existence and will abide/adhere to it. The declaration will be kept on the staff members file and may be referred to in legal proceedings if a staff member is found to be in breach of the policy:

- Ensure that during the recruitment and selection of all types of human resources the staff recruitment practices are followed as mentioned below.
- Ensure that all staff is adequately trained on the policy and protocols.

4. CHILD SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

SSDO is committed to prohibit recruiting anyone under the age of 18 years. SSDO will always try to recruit the most suitable person for any role, ensuring that they respect and value young people and are committed to good practice in working with young people. Our practices aim to recruit the most suitable candidate to work for our programs.

4.1. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO STAFF

In relation to the recruitment of staff, the individual line manager recruiting and selecting representatives SSDO must ensure that these procedures are followed. They must read this section carefully as certain procedures (e.g., reference checks, interview) will be relevant for these roles.

4.2. DEVELOPMENT OF RELEVANT JOB DESCRIPTIONS

All positions for SSDO have a specific job description. For positions that are directly linked with children/young people, the line manager must ensure that they carefully consider the role and the required level of qualification and experience needed to uphold good practice in working with children/young people. The line manager must ensure that candidates are selected against these criteria.

5. ANTI-CHILD LABOR RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

SSDO has zero tolerance against child labor and is strictly prohibit recruiting anyone under the age of 18 years. This applies to all recruitments including of staff, interns, consultants or any other resource persons.

6. USE OF CHILDREN'S IMAGES

SSDO will at all times portray children in a respectful and appropriate manner. Guidelines on the use of children's images are included in Annex: 2 Child Protection Code of Conduct.

7. IMPLICATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Child abuse is not acceptable to SSDO and it reserves the right to refuse employment offer to staff if they are deemed to pose a risk to children.

Similarly, if any consultants / resource persons, Visitors, suppliers and any other individuals working for or SSDO are found to be engaged, or suspected of being engaged in the Child abuse acts will be reported to the relevant authorities or their employer. Their names will be blacklisted by SSDO.

8. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING PROCESSES

Any known or suspected case of child abuse must be brought to the attention of Line Manager who then informs the Child Protection Focal Person and/or Senior Management. In the event that staff members have concerns related to the behavior of their Line Manager, they should raise these concerns directly with Child Protection Focal Person.

9. CHILD SAFEGUARDING RISK MANAGEMENT

Under this policy, SSDO will ensure that a Safeguarding risk assessment is part of the Quality Insurance and compliance is ensured through monitoring of the project at field level.

SSDO ensures child development and protection through working with stakeholders involved in any activity especially in SSDO's Projects. SSDO ensures that the voices of children are heard and incorporated in the projects that are directly related to their interest.

10. IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

- For the sake of effective and coordinated implementation of this policy, SSDO will ensure the following steps:
- SSDO Child Protection Policy is included in staff orientation package and all new comers will be oriented about this policy. Regular re-orientation/refresher sessions will be conducted for the staff to brief them on Child Protection Policy, organizational commitment on child protection and job expectations towards child protection.
- All Program staff is expected to consider Child Protection Policy while planning, implementing and monitoring of their child focused projects.
- To ensure coordinated implementation of the policy, SSDO has designated Quality & Accountability Officer who is the Child Protection Focal Person and is responsible to promote child protection throughout the organization, coordinate training for staff, and monitor internal policy compliance and regular review of policy.
- Child Protection Policy is accessible for all staff on SSDO's official website.
- Using organization systems for child pornography is strictly prohibited and staff has to report to their immediate supervisor if any of the guidelines are violated by any other staff member. SSDO procedures on computer, internet, equipment and email usage are outlined the guidelines for effective use of hardware resources offered by the organization.

11. ACCOUNTABILITY

Child protection responsibilities fall on each and every member of the organization. All staff is responsible for ensuring that the activities that they are involved in during the course of their work are carried out in accordance with this policy.

Managers are committed to ensure that this policy is fully communicated and followed by their team members. It is their responsibility to ensure that the activities and services they provide have adequate procedures to protect and safeguard children.

12. GUIDANCE AND REFERENCE

The policy should also be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Annex 1: Definitions
- Annex 2: Code of conduct of Child Protection

Annex 1: Definitions

Child: A child means every human being below the age of (18) eighteen years old.

Child Protection: Child Protection is defined as systems and mechanisms to prevent and respond to children from danger, hurt or impairment (physical, sexual, emotional, and bullying and abuse of power/authority) from the people who work with SSDO

Child Abuse: Child abuse is any action (or lack of) which endangers or impair a child's physical or emotional health and development.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing and acid throwing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns, or fractures.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is a persistent attack on a child or young person's self-esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse/Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Child Sexual Abuse is one of the most serious violations of children's rights in Pakistan. A growing number of children are being forced into a life of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is defined as actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest and all forms of sexual activity involving children, including exposing children to, or taking, pornographic photographs or other media/materials.

Commercial sexual exploitation is the act of providing children with money, goods or services in exchange for sexual acts of any kind, including involvement in pornography.

Sexual Abuse or commercial sexual exploitation may include non-contact activities and abuse through internet, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, abusive images or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Abuse of Power/Authority: Abuse of Power/Authority can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. An abuse of power/authority could be committed by, for example, a teacher/trainer/recourse person, humanitarian or development worker or faith leader.

Abuse of power/authority may also include ignoring and omitting a child on the basis of race, faith, color, sex, economic status, or political opinion during delivery of services.

This is particularly important in the context of humanitarian aid/services, when those in positions of power also control aid and resources



Annex 2: Child Protection Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behavior towards children. The Code ensures that all staff (local/international), volunteers/interns (local/international), visitors, consultants / resource persons, implementing partners, contractors, suppliers and any other individuals working for or representing SSDO, understand clearly what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior towards children, in order to protect against false allegations by others. It also serves to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. All staff (local/international), volunteers/interns (local/international), visitors, consultants / resource persons, implementing partners, contractors, suppliers and any other individuals working for or representing SSDO are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct.

I Will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Listen to and value children's ideas and opinion.
- Listen to children and take action to protect their well-being.
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them effectively.
- Be visible when working with children, as far as possible. Whenever possible, I will ensure that another adult is present when I am working in the proximity of children.
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that bad practices or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged.
- Keep confidential all information that I am party to regarding child protection cases, disclosing such information only to those individuals as outlined in our organization's Child Protection Reporting Mechanism.
- Report any violation of these standards of behavior, in accordance with the organization's child protection policy and mechanism.

I Will Not:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children. I will refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children).
- Belittle, insult, shout at, or otherwise verbally or emotionally abuse a child
- Behave physically or say anything to a child in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Hire children as domestic labour or for other work which is inappropriate to their age or development stage, which interferes with time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Develop "special" relationships with specific children for my own needs.
- Develop physical / sexual relationships with children
- Give gifts or show favoritism.

- Have purely personal contact with children from the organization's programs outside of work.
- Never be alone with a child in a room with the door closed. If absolutely necessary e.g., providing counseling, then I must notify my superior first.
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others (this includes drivers of vehicles belonging to the organization).

Use of Children's Images:

SSDO will at all times portray children in a respectful and appropriate manner. As a member staff, volunteers/interns, visitors, consultants / resource persons, implementing partners, contractors, suppliers of SSDO, I agree to the following image guidelines:

- A child should always be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive. Amount of clothing will vary from culture to culture, but generally babies and children must be wearing pants or similar at a minimum. Girls beyond toddler should be wearing a top.
- A child and its family must always be asked for consent when using their images. When asking for consent to use the image, details should be given as to how and where this image will be used.
- Children should be portrayed as part of their community.
- Local culture traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Images should be an honest representation of the context and the facts.
- There should be no identification information of the child used in the publication of images with their location. All recorded identifying details are to be stored confidentially.
- When sending images electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.
- This is not a complete list. The basic understanding is that staff should avoid actions or behavior which may constitute bad practices or potentially abusive behavior, and should use their own common sense in considering what may be acceptable and unacceptable behavior.