

ACRA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

September 2020

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
PART 1. ORGANISATION’S CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS	4
POLICY STATEMENT	4
SCOPE OF THE POLICY	4
DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS	5
ORGANIZATION’S CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES	5
ROLES AND RESPONSABILITIES	7
PART 2. PROCEDURES AND RESPONSES	8
REPORTING PROCEDURES	8
INVESTIGATION	9
CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION	11
PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION	11
SAFE RECRUITMENT	11
TRAINING AND AWARENESS	12
PARTNERS AND CONTRACTORS	12
SAFE PROGRAMMING	12
REVIEW OF THE POLICY	13

ANNEXES

Glossary and definitions
Declaration of agreement to be bound by uphold the ACRA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Incident report for reporting Child Abuse allegations
Report on investigations and actions taken for Child Abuse incident
Annual CS complaints report
Country CS Focal Point Terms of references
HQ CS Focal Point Terms of References
CS Policy Steering Committee Terms of References
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Abstract

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INTRODUCTION

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is divided into three parts which cover the four Child Safeguarding Standards as defined by Keeping Children Safe (KCS) - a global network of organisations that strive to ensure children are safeguarded and protected from all forms of abuse¹.

Part 1: The Policy – is in accordance with KCS Standard 1 - ‘Policy: The organisation develops a policy that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately to [incidents of] harm to children’. This part is the core of the policy - and is reinforced by the Code of Conduct that all ACRA representatives must adhere to.

Part 2: The child safeguarding guidelines – is in accordance with the following KCS Standard 2 - ‘People: The organisation places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these.’ Standard 3 - ‘Procedures: The organisation creates a child-safe environment through implementing Child Safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation’; and Standard 4 - ‘Accountability: The organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures’. This part provides further guidance on the child safeguarding considerations in all areas of work.

Part 3: the Annexes – Contain supporting materials referred to throughout this document.

ORGANISATION’S CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

POLICY STATEMENT

ACRA is committed to the protection of all children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence,” as outlined in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)². All ACRA representatives have a duty of care and responsibility to keep safe all children who we come into direct or indirect contact with. All action taken to protect children will be in accordance with the best interests of the child as defined by Article 3 of the UNCRC. In the delivery of its work, ACRA is committed to upholding the rights of children, and safeguarding them against actions (intended or unintended) that place them at risk of all forms of violence and harm, including child abuse and exploitation. ACRA has zero tolerance towards the abuse and exploitation of children by any of the organisation’s representatives. In addition, the organisation is equally committed to doing everything within its power to avoid unintended harm or accidents to children as a result of any of the activities.

The purpose of this policy is to protect children from all forms of abuse in the course of ACRA’s work and reflects our commitment to protect children. This policy enables ACRA to prevent, identify, report and respond to child safeguarding concerns - and ensure accountability and transparency at all times. Any violations of this policy will be treated as a serious issue and will result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination and any other available legal remedy.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all persons working for ACRA or on our behalf in any capacity, including ACRA staff all levels in ACRA Headquarters and ACRA country offices, board members, volunteers, interns. It also applies to contractors, external consultants, day labourers, individual and corporate suppliers and their related personnel which will have a direct contact with beneficiaries under the age of 18. It also applies to entities

¹ www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

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and their employees who have entered into a partnership with ACRA, sponsors and testimonials of ACRA's campaigns.

It applies during or outside of working hours, every day of the year. Except in countries where the following policy contravenes local legislation, in these cases, local legislation must be followed with guidance from the Child Safeguarding Focal Point. ACRA policy will apply in the event that it is more stringent than local legislation. The policy will be reviewed periodically, taking into account lessons learned from policy implementation and ongoing monitoring, changes in the organisation, and complementary policies.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

For the purposes of this Policy and ACRA's approach to Child Safeguarding, the definitions listed in [Annex 1 Definitions](#) apply. Specifically:

Child: Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child Rights: Children have the "right to life, survival and development" where development encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

Child Safeguarding: The policies, procedures and practices employed to safeguard children who come into contact with ACRA and all those associated with the delivery of our work from all forms of harm, abuse or exploitation and the responsibility of all personnel to embed these at the activity level to ensure ACRA is a child safe organisation.

Child Protection: The prevention of and response to significant harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Child Protection programming is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from all forms of violence. This includes the integration of child protection into all thematic areas of programming to enhance the protective environments for children in the community.

Child Abuse: Child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights and includes all forms of violence against children: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, family violence, sexual exploitation, abduction and trafficking, including for sexual purposes, involvement of a child in online child sexual exploitation and child labour as defined in [Annex 1 Definitions](#).

CP: Child Protection

CS: Child safeguarding.

CS Focal Point: the person designated to receive complaints and reports about alleged acts of child abuse and child safeguarding incidents involving ACRA staff and related personnel.

HQ: Head Quarters.

HR: Human Resources.

ORGANIZATION'S CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

ACRA's policy on child protection and safeguarding is guided by the following **core values**:

- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to live free from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work.
- We have a commitment to treat all children with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender (including gender diverse children), language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation or other status.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

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In order to meet the above standards of reporting and responding are met, **ACRA staff and related personnel will ensure** that they:

- Take seriously any concerns raised;
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- Support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- Act appropriately and effectively to open an inquire or cooperate with any subsequent process of investigation;
- Are guided through the child protection process by the principle of "best interests of the child";
- Listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children;
- Work in partnership with parents, caregivers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

Specific commitments should be made related to **child protection in communication and media**. ACRA staff and related personnel will ensure that³:

- Images of children should only be made, kept, and used where there is a valid reason associated with the activity involved and where informed consent has been given by the appropriate person.
- It is best if images focus on an activity and, where possible, feature groups of children rather than individuals.
- Be careful when revealing too many details about individual children as it may endanger them, although it is desirable to provide some information on the context of a photograph. Focusing on a group or family rather than individual children can provide more protection.
- Informed consent: ask for the child's/children's permission and get parental/guardian consent for images, including for the retention and use of the image. This means ensuring that everyone is fully aware where, when, and how the images will be used.
- Where images are kept for future use, relevant names, dates, and other contextual information should be stored with them, as well as the signed consent for their usage.
- For spontaneous or unplanned images, the relevant people should be informed of the purpose of the photograph as soon as it is taken and asked for consent. If consent is refused, the image should not be published.
- Stories and images of children should always be taken or written with the best interest of the child in mind.
- Ensure that all ACRA staff and related personnel, including contracted photographers or journalists, are not allowed to spend time with or have access to children without supervision.
- Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images should be reported and recorded in accordance with this policy.

The abovementioned indications are complementary to the **ACRA media and communication guidelines**.

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

- **Awareness:** we will ensure that all staff, partners, suppliers, consultants, and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children with whom we work or are in contact. We will make sure that induction package will include a thorough briefing on child protection and safeguarding. Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and CS incidents and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting. We will also ensure that all those associated with ACRA's work are notified of and made aware that they are expected to comply with the policy.

³ Reference: DOCHAS, *The illustrative guide to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on images and messages*, 2014

- **Prevention:** through awareness and good practice, training and safe recruitment, we will ensure that staff and others minimise the risks to children. All staff associated with ACRA and its partners are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct in relation to children.
- **Reporting:** we will ensure that staff and others have clear which steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safeguarding of children. It is expected that all those associated with ACRA report any suspicion of children suffering harm due to actions associated with ACRA staff and related personnel.
- **Responding:** we will ensure that appropriate and timely action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding their well-being; supporting those who raise such concerns; investigating, or cooperating with any subsequent investigation; and taking appropriate corrective action to prevent the recurrence of such activity. Reports will be taken into consideration by ACRA as soon as possible, possibly within the following 24 hours.

ROLES AND RESPONSABILITIES

All ACRA staff and related-personnel: everyone who works on behalf of ACRA is required to act quickly and immediately report suspicions or knowledge of a safeguarding concern or incident to a relevant contact at ACRA. Failure to report will be treated as serious and may result in termination of any agreement with ACRA. There is no obligation for an individual to report any incident that has happened to them.

Board members and Managing director: hold overall accountability for this policy and its implementation.

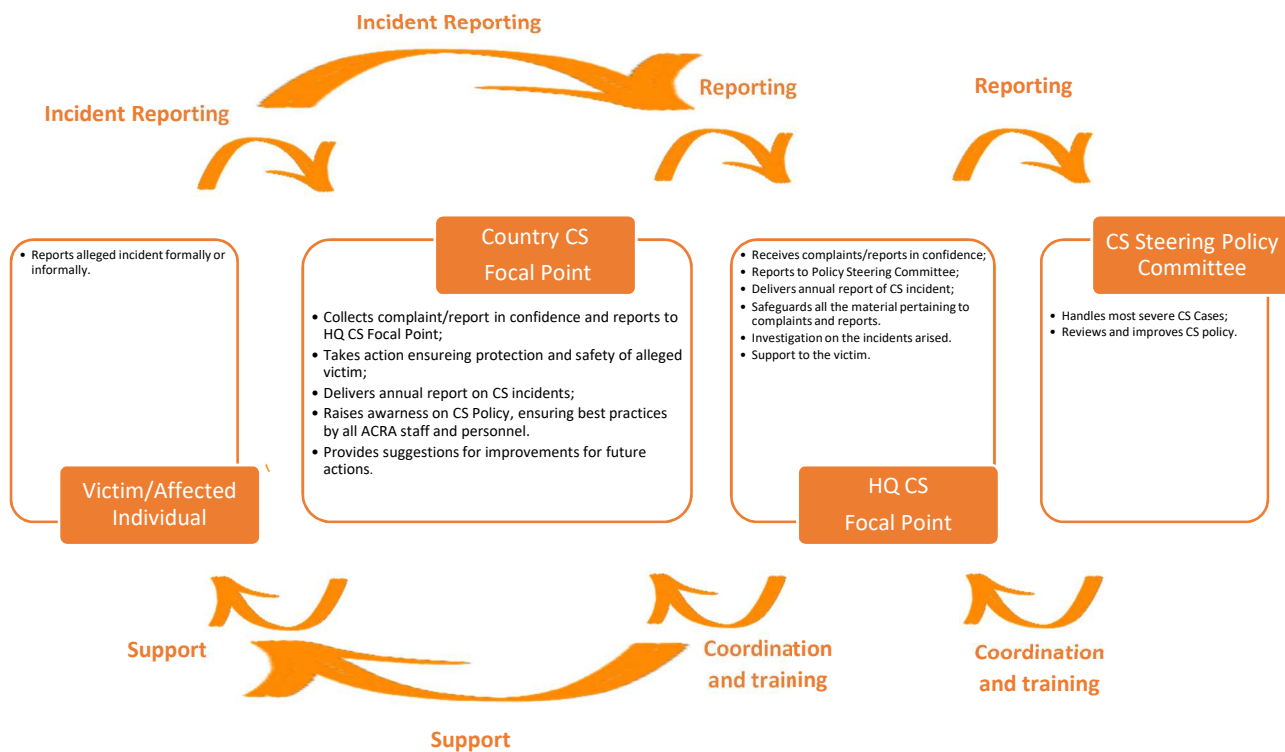
Child Safeguarding (CS) Focal Point: provides support to prevent and respond to child safeguarding incidents, raising awareness, and promoting best practices by receiving concerns, supporting victims, and reporting concerns in a confidential manner. A Child Safeguarding Focal Point will be designated for every ACRA Country Office (**Country CS Focal Point**). The **HQ CS Focal Point** coordinates the work of the CS Policy Steering Committee and leads the development of training and awareness materials on the content of the CS Policy and related standards of behaviour in coordination with the Country CS Focal Points. The HQ CS Focal Point will be the person designated to receive complaints and reports about alleged CS Incidents.

CS external advisors: provide support to CS Focal Points, staff, and programmes to prevent and respond to CS incidents, raising awareness, conducting training, and promoting best practices, as well as receiving concerns, conducting referrals to specialized services, and supporting investigations.

CS Policy Steering Committee: will be established to monitor and regularly report on progress to implement and adhere to the CS Policy to ACRA's Board. The CS Policy Steering Committee will be composed of ACRA Managing Director, President, HQ CS Focal Point, and a Board member. The CS Policy Steering Committee will meet on an ad-hoc basis to provide oversight and management support for alleged CS incidents. Moreover, the CS Policy Steering Committee will be responsible for regularly revising the CS Policy.

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PROCEDURES AND RESPONSES

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Reporting suspected or actual child abuse and CS incidents due to actions associated with ACRA staff and related personnel is **mandatory** for all ACRA staff, volunteers, consultants and sub-contractors. In fact, ACRA staff and related personnel have the responsibility to report any suspicion or concern of CS. Any individual (including ACRA's beneficiaries) can raise a concern/complaint to ACRA about an incident they have experienced, witnessed, or heard about concerning an ACRA staff member or partner (suppliers, partners, contractor, etc.) without fear of retribution. ACRA staff and related personnel must not investigate allegations or suspicions themselves. The complaint can be done verbally or in writing to ACRA Country/HQ CS Focal Point or the dedicated mailbox [childsafeguarding@acra.it]. Staff can also choose to raise concerns with their line manager or director at HQ level. Complaints can be done formally or informally. ACRA staff and related personnel have the responsibility to ensure a **child-friendly reporting process**, taking all needed measures to create a safe space for children to report and seek assistance.

A) Formal complaints

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Formal complaints of possible CS may be made by children who consider being affected individuals or another person that becomes aware of the wrongdoing. Formal complaints may be done anonymously and are not subject to deadlines.

A formal complaint of CS must describe the specific incident(s) of possible CS. The Formal complaint shall include as much detail as possible. For instance, the complaint could include the following information:

- Name of the alleged offender
- Name of the alleged affected child (if the report is made by a third party).
- Date(s) and location(s) of incident(s)
- Description of incident(s)/patterns
- Names of witnesses, if any
- Any other relevant information, including documentary evidence, if available.
- Date of the submission of the report and name of the person making the report, unless the report is made anonymously.
- If the person making the report chooses to report on an anonymous basis, the reporter must provide sufficient information concerning the basis of the allegations and sufficient detail or supporting factual basis that the matter can be pursued responsibly. Otherwise, the matter typically cannot be pursued further.

B) Informal complaint and mediation

An alleged affected person may wish to deal with the situation of possible CS issues in an informal manner. In this case, the affected child may ask for assistance from a mediator in seeking informal resolution. With the consent of the affected child and the consent of their parent or guardian, the mediator may meet informally with the alleged offender to provide information about the situation and discuss how it might be resolved. An unsuccessful attempt to resolve the matter informally does not preclude it from being formally reported.

INVESTIGATION

All concerns or allegations will always be taken seriously, and investigated and acted upon where appropriate, in line with ACRA's safeguarding principles listed below.

Robust and accountable case management: All allegations of child abuse or CS incidents, and subsequent follow-up, will be documented in a secure and confidential database to ensure accountability. The report will be officially acknowledged within 24 hours, and the safeguarding team will initiate the procedures accordingly.

Investigations: ACRA will carry out child-friendly, independent, safe, and discreet investigations, through trained ACRA CS Focal Points, recognising the rights of and duty of care to everyone involved, including the complainant and/or survivor (accompanied by their parent or guardian), witnesses and the subject of complaint (SoC). The following protocols need to be observed when interviewing alleged victims/affected children:

- Victims and their parent or guardian will be told of the purpose of the interview and informed consent must be sought before the interview is conducted.
- Interviews will not be conducted in any space where it may create suspicion amongst outsiders (including authorities, community members, etc.).
- In all situations, interviews will be conducted in the presence of a minimum of 2 adults of which one is the same gender as the child concerned and of which one is approved by the victim as a trusted individual.
- All efforts will be made to ensure that victims do not feel exposed or vulnerable during the interview.
- Interviewing techniques and methodologies should be age- and gender-appropriate. As much as possible, follow-up interviews/discussions will be conducted by the same interviewer.

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- Victims will be informed of all possible steps, including referral for assistance and eventual investigation.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure safety and protection for victims, as well as alleged offenders and complainants if different from the victims. Where there is any conflict of interest between the victim and another involved party, the victim's wishes must be the principal consideration in case of handling, particularly when there is a risk of additional physical and/or emotional harm.
- Any intentionally false, malicious, or vexatious statement, misrepresentation, or accusation against another ACRA staff or a third party will also be considered serious misconduct.

Accountable decision-making: ACRA will take swift and appropriate action against ACRA employees and Related Personnel who are found to have committed any abuse involving children. This may include administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant local authorities if appropriate and safe to do so. A child-friendly, independent and gender representative decision-making panel will be assigned in every investigation to ensure impartiality, transparency, and accountability. If needed, the decision making process will be subject to scrutiny by CS external advisors. The Country CS Focal Point will be responsible for follow-up on the case together with the specialized case team (internal or external) if needed, record action taken and support provided, always coordinating with the HQ CS Focal Point. All response strategies need to be developed in a manner that balances respect for due process with a child-friendly approach in which the victim's wishes, safety, and well-being remain a priority in all matters and procedures.

Survivor Support: Survivors of violations to child safeguarding are entitled to specialised support services. ACRA commits to refer survivors to competent support services as appropriate and available and according to the wants and the needs of the survivor. Support may include specialist child-oriented psychosocial support such as counselling, medical assistance, legal counselling.

Legislation: When handling child abuse complaints, ACRA will take into account the relevant legislation in both Italy and the country in which the alleged incident took place.

The chart below summarizes steps to be taken when any allegation of child abuse or CS incidents is reported formally or informally.

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Guarantee that the victim/affected child is noted to the Country/HQ CS Focal Points as established by the CS Policy procedures.



Does the case needs internal investigation?

Does the case needs to be forwarded to the local authorities?

Is the reported incident a result of the way the work is conducted?



Nominate an investigating panel, execute the investigation, report the investigation outcomes and actions.



Report the case to local authorities, register the measures taken and follow up on the case.



Examine the circumstances that resulted to the incident and put forward possible adjustments to the CS Policy and its implementation

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Confidentiality of information is extremely important when working with child victims, and needs to be addressed with the utmost care. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process. Staff involved in the complaints process will be made aware of the importance of maintaining the confidentiality and may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Any breach of the data protection and sharing protocols may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. ACRA may disclose information about incidents as required by national laws to report criminal cases. All materials about complaints and reports about alleged acts of child abuse and CS incidents will be handled in strict confidence to protect the rights of all involved and will be kept and safeguarded by the ACRA HQ CS Focal Point.

PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

Any form of retaliation against complainants, victims, or other witnesses may entail disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of collaboration/contract.

SAFE RECRUITMENT

In compliance with applicable laws, ACRA is committed to preventing perpetrators of child abuse from being (re)hired or (re)deployed. ACRA will ensure robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel, including employees, volunteers, consultants, and other representatives. As part of this, all application forms, interviews, and references must address safeguarding and equality requirements and attitudes. All published vacancies will state that ACRA has a CS Policy that the successful candidate will be expected to comply with and promote. ACRA will undertake a diligent reference “clear check” database of candidates during the recruiting process.

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All staff, volunteers, interns, and consultants will be required to acknowledge in writing the receipt, understanding, and commitment to the CS Policy and related standards of behaviour before the commencement of their contract.

ACRA reserves the right not to hire or employ an applicant if the recruitment process or background check reveals that the applicant has been previously reported for a CS incident or is not suitable to work with beneficiaries.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

ACRA is committed to educating its staff and related personnel on this Policy, especially on how to reduce risks and create child-safe environments. As part of its child protection training, ACRA will:

- Provide all new staff/partners with ACRA's Child Safeguarding Package;
- Incorporate extensive information on ACRA's Child Protection Policy in the briefing procedures for new staff.
- Provide child protection trainings to staff assigned in projects where they will work directly with children.

The CS policy summary is made available in local languages to be disseminated in target communities, with partners and other relevant stakeholders. Posters of the CS Policy commitments and related standards of behaviour must be displayed in each ACRA Country Office and bases. The CS Policy is available on ACRA's website in different languages.

ACRA staff and personnel are asked to attend the free on line course "[Safeguarding Essentials](#)" organized by Kaya and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy.

PARTNERS AND CONTRACTORS

Acceptance of and compliance with the CS Policy and related standards of behaviour must be a condition of every partnership agreement or contract.

- ACRA will ensure that, when engaging in partnerships agreements, these agreements incorporate the ethic clauses of this Policy;
- ACRA will ensure that, when engaging in contracts with companies working directly with beneficiaries under the age of 18, these contracts incorporate the ethic clauses of this Policy or those of the company's (if it is of an acceptable standard);
- Include the appropriate language requiring such contracting entities and individuals, and their employees and volunteers to abide by a Code of Conduct that is according to the standards of this Policy;
- Expressly state that the failure of those entities or individuals, as appropriate, to take preventive measures against child abuse, to investigate and report allegations thereof, or to take corrective actions when CS incidents have occurred, shall constitute grounds for ACRA to terminate such agreements.

Where ACRA receives a complaint about a partner organisation/contractor, ACRA will expect the partner/contractor to respond safely, quickly, and appropriately.

Where appropriate, ACRA will work with the partner/contractor to address the issue through an appropriate independent investigation. If the outcome is that abuse has occurred, ongoing work with the partner/contractor cannot involve the individual(s) concerned. ACRA reserves the right to suspend or cancel a partnership agreement or contract based on an investigation into child abuse and CS incidents allegations.

SAFE PROGRAMMING

All ACRA's interventions need to be designed and implemented to minimise actual or potential risks which might lead to child abuse, misconducts and CS violations by ACRA staff and related personnel against children

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of the community they come into contact with or impact upon directly or indirectly. ACRA is committed to ensuring child-safe programmes by identifying risk factors for vulnerability to child abuse which may be related to the context of the specificity of the programmes themselves and taking all necessary mitigation measures.

It will be the responsibility of the ACRA country coordinators and regional desk officers to integrate CS considerations into the design of needs assessment and new project proposals, including identification of activity-specific CS risks and related CS mitigation measures.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed (recommended every 24 months) with a process initiated by the CS Steering Policy Committee. The review process will take in due account all issues, criticalities and best practices emerged during the implementation of this policy. The CS Steering Policy Committee will be held accountable for the review and implementation of the CS policy.

Policy reviewed in September 2020

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ANNEX I

Glossary / Definitions

The following definitions will serve as a guide in connection with our policy.

Child: Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child abuse: child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights and includes all forms of violence against children: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, family violence, sexual exploitation, abduction and trafficking, including for sexual purposes, involvement of a child in online child sexual exploitation and child labour as defined below.

- *Physical Abuse:* When a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. It also includes cultural practices which can alter physicality in ways that cause distress, harm and/or cause lasting health ramifications such as Female Genital Mutilation.
- *Neglect:* The persistent failure, where there are means, or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development is placed at risk.
- *Emotional Abuse:* A persistent attack on a child's self-esteem. Examples include, but are not limited to –name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, shaming, intimidating or isolating the child.
- *Child Sexual Abuse:* When a child is used by another child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual abuse involves contact and non-contact activities which encompasses all forms of sexual activity involving children, including exposing a child to online child sexual exploitation material, or taking sexually exploitative images of children.
- *Family violence:* Includes verbal, physical, sexual or emotional violence within the household or family, which the child witnesses, usually on a regular basis.
- *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:* Comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is targeted as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.
- *Online Child Sexual Exploitation:* Includes all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that have, at some stage, connection to the online environment. It includes any use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) that results in sexual exploitation or causes a child to be sexually exploited or results in or causes images or other material documenting such sexual exploitation to be produced, bought, sold, possessed, distributed or transmitted.
- *Child Marriage:* a formal marriage or informal union before age 18, is a reality for both boys and girls, although girls are disproportionately the most affected. Child marriage is widespread and can lead to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation.
- *Grooming:* Generally, refers to behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. For example, an offender may build a relationship of trust with the child, and then seek to sexualise that relationship (for example favouring a child, isolating a child, giving excessive attention or gifts, using sexualised language or physical contact, or exposing the child to sexual concepts through online sexual exploitation material).
- *Online-Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse:* The act of sending an electronic message to a recipient who the sender believes to be under 18 years of age, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not

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- necessarily the sender; or of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient who the sender believes to be under 18 years of age.-
- *Child Labour*: Often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling a recreation. In its extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families and exposed to serious hazards and illnesses.
 - *Child Trafficking*: Relates to any role in the recruitment, transportation or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation, by means of threat, force or other forms of coercion. This includes abuse of power.
 - *Military use of Children*: Where children are engaged in or exposed to military activity, including as soldiers or human shield.

Child Participation: Anyone below the age of 18 taking part in a process or playing a role in a process at his/her level, according to his or her evolving capacities. Children and young people thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, and interacting in a positive way with other people; involving children in the decisions, which affect their lives, the lives of the community and the larger society in which they live.

Child Protection: The prevention of and response to significant harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Child Protection programming is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from all forms of violence. This includes the integration of child protection into all thematic areas of programming to enhance the protective environments for children in the community.

Child Rights: Children have the “right to life, survival and development” where development encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

Child Safeguarding: The policies, procedures and practices employed to safeguard children who come into contact with ACRA and all those associated with the delivery of our work from all forms of harm, abuse or exploitation and the responsibility of all personnel to embed these at the activity level to ensure ACRA is a child safe organisation.

Contact with Children: Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve direct (including online contact with children) or indirect contact (such as use of children’s images) with children. This can be either under the position description or as a result of performing the position such as coming into contact with children when working in communities.

Informed Consent. Capacity to give freely consent based on all available information, according to the age and evolving capacities of the child. For example, if you seek consent from a child regarding taking their photograph and using it for publicity purposes, the child is informed as to how the photograph will be used and is given the opportunity to refuse. If a child is invited to input into the development of a child protection policy, they must be made aware of the time it will take, what exactly will be involved, their roles and responsibilities and only then will they be able to give their "informed consent".

Working with Children: Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid works.

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DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND BY UPHOLD THE ACRA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR PARTNERS

[NAME OF THE ENTITY] hereby acknowledges that it has received and read a copy of the ACRA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Agrees that all forms Child Abuse violate universally recognized international norms and standards, and the principles upon which humanitarian action is based.

Accepts and commits to actively prevent acts of Child Abuse by its personnel and associates, and to respond to Child Abuse incidents that are perpetrated against beneficiaries or other members of the community in compliance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Ensures that no personnel hired, deployed, or engaged in projects implemented in partnership with ACRA or with the support of ACRA, have ever been involved in any form of Child Abuse before.

Is fully aware to be liable to suspension or cancellation of the partnership agreement with ACRA should any of its personnel member or associate be found in breach of the ACRA Child Protection and Safeguarding policy standards of behavior, and the concern is mishandled.

[NAME & SURNAME]	
Legal Representative of [NAME OF THE ENTITY]	
Date	
Place	

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INCIDENT REPORT FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

If you have seen an actual incident or suspect and have cause for concern regarding an incident of Child Abuse, please follow the guidelines and fill out the questions below where appropriate. You must identify in this form whether it is an actual incident or a suspected incident. **CONFIDENTIAL:** please restrict the access to this document and keep it stored safely.

Complaint Details (Person reporting the complaint): Name: _____ Position: _____ Relationship with ACRA: _____ Line Manager/Supervisor: _____ Contact details: _____	
Victim Details (Affected person): Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____ Nationality: _____ Village/Town: _____ Municipality/District: _____ Country: _____	Parent/Legal Guardian/Caregiver Details: Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____ Nationality: _____ Relationship with the victim: _____ Village/Town: _____ Municipality/District: _____ Country: _____
Incident Details (please identify whether it is an actual incident or a suspected incident): Has the incident been seen or is the incident suspected? _____ Who disclosed the incident to you? _____ Date of the alleged incident: _____ Time of the alleged incident: _____ Location of the alleged incident: _____ Description of the alleged incident and how it's affecting you and your work (Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant document or evidence): _____ _____ Was there any other individual involved in the alleged incident? If so, who? _____ Was there any witness? If so, who? _____ _____	
Alleged Offender Details: Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____ Ethnic origin/Nationality: _____ Position: _____ Relationship with ACRA: _____	
Observations (physical injuries or other observations): 	
Has the affected person previously complained about related incidents? If yes, when and to whom did he/she complain? 	
SIGNATURE PERSON REPORTING: 	
DATE: 	
SIGNATURE ACRA CS FOCAL POINT FOR RECEPTION : 	
REFERENCE NUMBER (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CS FOCAL POINT): [XX/YY]	

REPORT ON INVESTIGATIONS & ACTIONS TAKEN FOR CHILD ABUSE INCIDENT

The CS focal point, following the reporting of an incident, will fill in a report on the actions taken by the organization in response to the incident reported, to the resolution.

CONFIDENTIAL: please restrict the access to this document and keep it stored safely.

REFERENCE NUMBER: [XX/YY]
Description of the action taken by the organization in response to the alleged incident reported (investigations, support measures to protect the victim, warning, legal action, dismissal, monitoring, ect.), specify the timing, if external support involved:
Description of the action taken by other organizations or entities (local authorities, ect.) in response to the allegations:
RESOLUTION:
DATE:
SIGNATURE ACRA CS FOCAL POINT :

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ANNUAL CS COMPLAINTS REPORT

For the period from 01/01/YY to 31/12/YY

This report summarizes every Child Abuse complaint activity at ACRA for the year _____. The report also highlights improvements that have been implemented as a direct response from such complaints. This report is filled in by the HQ/Country Focal Point.

Table 1: Activity and Performance Data

	YY
Number of complaints formal received	
Number of complaints informal received	
Number of complaints closed	

Table 2: Details of each complaint received

Month request was received	Ref no. XX/YY	Channel of complaint	Issue of complaint	Outcomes and Actions

COUNTRY/HQ FOCAL POINT:
NAME SURNAME:
SIGNATURE:
DATE:

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Country CS Focal Point Terms of References

General purpose of the role:

With the support and supervision of the HQ CS Focal Point, the Country CS Focal Point established by ACRA is assigned to collect complaints and reports about alleged acts of Child Abuse involving ACRA staff and personnel within the geographical area/country of responsibility. Additionally, the Country CS Focal Point has the responsibility to actively ensure awareness on the best practices in accordance to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Reporting line

HQ CS Focal Point

Main responsibilities and tasks

- Collect complaints and reports about alleged acts of Child Abuse involving ACRA staff and personnel within the geographical area/country of responsibility;
- Ensure complete confidentiality of complaints and reports;
- Take appropriate action to support and ensure safety to victims of alleged cases of Child Abuse, as well as alleged offenders;
- Follow-up on the Child Abuse cases together with specialized team (internal or external) if needed;
- Update HQ CS Focal Point by signalling the received reports;
- Deliver the annual report on Child Abuse complaints and reports related to the geographical area/country of responsibility to the HQ CS Focal Point;
- Raise awareness on the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, promoting and ensuring best practices by all ACRA staff and personnel, as well as beneficiaries and target communities;
- Encourage and disseminate the availability of reporting procedures in the clearest way, to ensure that victims are aware of their possibilities of action;
- Guarantee that every ACRA staff and related personnel has completed the mandatory training and ensuring that the course requested by ACRA has been completed by collecting the course certificates, directly hired in the geographical area/country of responsibility ;
- Collect ACRA staff and personnel's declarations of any previously existing relationships with beneficiaries (if it is the case);
- Share with the HQ CS Focal Point lessons learned, best practices and risks to improve the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy reporting mechanisms, policy and protocols;
- Provide inputs, suggestions for improvements and recommendations for future actions for the regular revision of the country-specific Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy strategy.
- Keep the clear check register in the country for candidate and staff and related personnel.

I, the undersigned _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to perform the role of Country CS Focal Point in accordance with this terms of reference.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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HQ CS Focal Point Terms of References

General purpose of the role:

The HQ CS Focal Point established by ACRA is in charge of ensuring the implementation of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy within, with particular emphasis on the Child Protection and Safeguarding training and awareness. Additionally, the HQ CS Focal Point is in charge of monitoring and supervising the Country CS Focal Point(s) to ensure proper and effective response to Child Abuse allegations.

Reporting line

HQ CS Focal Point

Main responsibilities and tasks:

- Receive complaints and reports about alleged Child Abuse Incidents;
- Safeguard all the materials pertaining to complaints and reports about alleged acts of Child Abuse in strict confidence;
- Alert and update the CS Policy Steering Committee by signalling critical Child Abuse incidents;
- Prepare the Annual Report on Child Abuse allegations for the HQ and country missions and submit the report at least once a year to the CS Policy Steering Committee;
- Coordinate the work of the CS Policy Steering Committee;
- Support the development of the country-specific Child Protection and Safeguarding strategy, as well as the elaboration of the country-specific annual implementation plan and the identification of the necessary resources for implementation;
- Monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of the Child Protection and Safeguarding training and awareness materials and programmes;
- Lead the development of training and awareness materials on the content of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and related standards of behaviour;
- Collect ACRA staff and personnel's declarations of any previously existing relationships with beneficiaries (if it is the case);
- Sit in the meetings of the CS Policy Steering Committee on ad-hoc basis.
- Keep the clear check register in the country for candidate and staff and related personnel.

I, the undersigned _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to perform the role of HQ CS Focal Point in accordance with this terms of reference.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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CS Policy Steering Committee Terms of References

General purpose of the role:

The CS Policy Steering Committee established by ACRA will be responsible for the monitoring and regular report on the progress to implement and adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to ACRA's Board. The CS Policy Steering Committee will be composed by the ACRA Managing Director, President, HQ CS Focal Point, and a Board Member.

Main responsibilities and tasks:

- Supervise the Country CS Focal Point(s) and HQ CS Focal Points to ensure proper and effective response to Child Abuse allegations;
- Monitor the implementation of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to ACRA's Board;
- Meet on ad-hoc basis to provide oversight and management support for alleged Child Abuse incidents;
- Periodically (at least once a year) review the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for possible improvements both on the implementation and on the reporting procedures;
- Analyse annual report provided by Country CS Focal Point(s) and by HQ CS Focal Points;
- Handle the most severe cases of Child Abuse reported to the CS Focal Points. Such cases will have to be reported to ACRA Board of directors.

I, the undersigned _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to perform the role of CS Policy Steering Committee in accordance with this terms of reference.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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ABSTRACT OF ACRA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

ACRA is committed to providing a safe environment for all children free from any form of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence. All ACRA representatives have a corresponding responsibility to actively promote such an environment of safety to all children who we come into direct or indirect contact.

ACRA has zero tolerance towards the abuse and exploitation of children by any of the organisation's representatives.

ORGANISATION'S CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

The specific standards defined by the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy apply to all related personnel – including ACRA staff at all levels in ACRA HQ and ACRA country offices, board members, volunteers, interns, contractors, external consultants, day labourers, individual and corporate suppliers or contractors and their related personnel – while under a contract with ACRA. They apply during or outside working hours, every day of the year. Such standards state as follow:

- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to live free from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work.
- We have a commitment to treat all children with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender (including gender diverse children), language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation or other status.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

ACRA is committed to promoting a working environment free of child abuse in which all children are treated with respect. Any violation of these standards establishes severe misconduct. Failure to obey these standards or failure to report child abuse can result in disciplinary action. This action may include termination of the contract with ACRA.

Acceptance and compliance with the standards defined by the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy are a necessary condition to conclude any arrangement or contract. ACRA will reserve the right to not enter in such agreements with individuals or entities which do not recognize such standards.

For further details, please consult the complete ACRA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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