

# Afrikagrupperna's Policy for Child Protection

Afrikagrupperna's policy for child protection aims to ensure that the rights of children are not violated in relation to Afrikagrupperna's and our partner organisations' operations and that we as an organization has sufficient systems, mechanisms and awareness to mitigate these risks. The policy applies to members, the board, elected representatives and staff. Our partner organisations must share these values and have systems in place to protect children in their operations.

Afrikagrupperna uses the *UN convention on the Rights of the Child* as a base. A child is any person under the age of 18. All children are of equal value and have the same rights, and must never be discriminated against, irrespective of the child's or parent/guardian's skin color; gender, gender identity or gender expression; language; religion; political or other views; national, ethnic or social origin; property; functional variation; sexual orientation; civil or other status.

Afrikagrupperna does not tolerate any form of discrimination, exploitation or violence (physical or psychological) against children. Afrikagrupperna should in all its operations and cooperation mitigate risks of children being exposed to any such acts, to respect a child's integrity and never compromise his/her physical and/or psychological health.

Both Afrikagrupperna and our partner organisations should immediately report suspicions to relevant authorities/structures, if a child has been exposed to some form of discrimination, injury, violation, physical or psychological violence, sexual abuse or exploitation. For Afrikagrupperna's own activities report should be done to Afrikagrupperna's management or by using Afrikagrupperna whistleblower function on our webpage. If Afrikagrupperna staff is involved a disciplinary process will follow. For legal action national laws applies.

This policy comprises protection and mitigation against:

*Physical abuse*

Any form of corporal punishment or other type of action causing physical injury is considered physical abuse of children.

### *Psychological abuse*

Psychological abuse includes ridicule, criticism, mockery, disparagement, rejection, exclusion, neglect, unreasonable demands, forced isolation from social contacts and age-appropriate activities, and constant refusal to listen to what the child has to say. Witness (see or hear) violence in his/her immediate environment or live in an environment where there is frequent violence or threats of violence.

### *Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation*

Covers all forms of sexual acts forced on a child by another person. Exploiting the child's position of dependency. Abuse of a child's vulnerable position for sexual purposes based on a position of power or trust. Could include promising the child monetary, social or political gain.

### Afrikagrupperna shall on its own and in cooperation with partner organisations:

- Plan and organize work in a way that minimizes the risks of children being exposed to abuse or violation.
- Include child protection as a specific point when doing risk assessments on projects and activities
- During field visits or in any other contact with children be cautious not to behave in any way that places a child or young person at risk of harm, exploitation or abuse. Never fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children or young people in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
- Increase knowledge among staff and partner organisations on child protection.
- Include empowerment of children and their families/caregivers in operations. (talk about rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable and which actions to take if problems occur). Empowerment does also entail the right to participate and to take the voices and opinion of children and youth into account.
- In Afrikagrupperna's work with communication, fundraising and collection of stories from partner organisations pay specific attention to how children are portrayed and how we get the stories. Cut from our guideline on images:
  - Only publish pictures viewing children and youth as strong and active individuals.
  - All children should wear covering clothing. We never publish pictures of naked children or pictures which may be perceived as sexual.
  - Published texts or pictures may never reveal any sensitive parts of a child's life.
  - It should not be possible to identify the child based on the picture, and that is why we never publish the full name of the child but just the first name.
  - The pictures must never endanger the life of a child
  - Before publishing a consent from the child's parent/guardian must be given.

This policy relates to Afrikagrupperna's following policies and guidelines:

- Code of Conduct
- Whistle Blower Guideline
- Policy on Anti-corruption
- Communication Policy
- Guideline for Photography