



Child Protection Policy

Gruppo per le Relazioni Transculturali
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Foreword¹

GRT believes that all children have a right to grow up in a protective environment which is free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Child abuse in all forms is unacceptable to GRT which recognizes its responsibility to protect children from harm in all areas of its work.

This Child Protection Policy was adopted on September 2013 as part of the highly prioritized objective to build a child safe organization. The process of child protection in GRT involves creating a child safe environment and human rights based approach in all programs, promoting good conduct as well as developing the appropriate tools to identify report and respond effectively to concerns of child abuse. This policy will be periodically updated to reflect current best practices and concentrate on a public commitment to child protection.

GRT strongly believes that a child protection policy is paramount to condemn child abuse in all forms (including: neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse) and to create an effective response in case employees, GRT partners and others face concerns of abuse at some point. One of the aims of the Child Protection Policy is to provide guidance to employees, partners and others and define standards in dealing with issues of child protection.

GRT is furthermore committed to implement the Child Protection Policy taking into account local understanding of child abuse, culture, religion, local law and traditional practices in the Somali context.

¹ This Child Protection Policy has been developed taking inspiration from the policies of other INGOs with a strong commitment towards the protection of children (Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, War Child). It has been adapted to the reality of intervention, scope and context in which GRT works.

1. Implementing the GRT Child Protection Policy

There are three main elements to the effective implementation of the policy and they are:

- Developing and implementing a management structure
- Raising awareness of the policy.
- Developing and implementing efficient procedures.

GRT Child Protection Policy, procedures and support materials should be disseminated to all internal and external groups identified in the scope of the document. Emphasis should be put on all employees and partners in order to ensure that they are aware of the content of the policy and the responsibility/accountability relying on them in terms of child protection.

2. Management structure

Regional Representative

The Regional Representative has overall responsibility for GRT Child Protection Policy (CPP). The Protection Coordinator will provide technical guidance and support to ensure the proper implementation of the CPP.

Coordinators/Managers (with line management responsibility)

All coordinators and/or managers are responsible for the day to day implementation/respect of the Child Protection Procedures in accordance with the policy. Managers have direct responsibility for ensuring that all individuals, whatever their status and role, who come into contact with children (under the scope of GRT activities) are provided information regarding this policy (the

minimum standards related to it) and its accompanying procedures.

Where concerns of child abuse arise, managers have the responsibility to ensure that timely and mandatory internal reporting is in place and effective. They must also decide on the correct course of action, based on this policy and its accompanying procedures. In all cases the “best interest of the child” shall be considered above anything else.

Employees

All GRT employees should be aware, through this policy document, of their responsibilities and duty of care to ensure child abuse is prevented by all means. In addition, employees should also be aware of their predetermined role in protecting children and their responsibility for mandatory reporting concerns where witnessing allegations, disclosures or suspicion of child abuse occur. The GRT Code of Conduct sets out the specific behavior requirements of all employees.

Partners

This Child Protection Policy seeks to develop partners awareness related to child protection at the same time as defining their legal and moral responsibility (a duty of care) for the children under their care (but outside of their immediate control) in the project. Therefore the scope of this policy clearly reflects the need to embrace the child protection philosophy during all stages of project designing/implementation and M&E, particularly when designing and negotiating concept papers, proposals, agreements and funding. This policy cannot and indeed should not be “forced” on unwilling partners but it should be clearly

identified as one of the fundamental areas of GRT philosophy of working with children.

Where concerns of child abuse arise, GRT will consider its legal obligations to report those concerns to relevant, competent authorities and will take appropriate measures towards its employee or the partner organization.

3. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection processes cannot provide complete guarantees regarding GRT employees. However, rigorous procedures emphasizing the importance of child protection can reduce the risk by acting as a deterrent and by helping to detect those presenting a potential risk to children. Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures which reflect child protection issues and adhere to the principles of GRT Code of Conduct will be put in place. Managing risk is the key to recruitment and selection and local procedures should be based on a detailed analysis of each job task and assessment of the level of contact with children.

Managers are responsible for undertaking a detailed analysis of job tasks and assessing the level of contact with children (therefore the level of risk) as part of the initial policy implementation process.

Information to all selected applicants includes:

- Child Protection Policy
- Reporting Tools
- GRT Code of Conduct
- Declaration form (see example at the end of this manual)

General

- All jobs advertised will include a job description, individual requirements and will state that GRT has a child protection policy that the successful candidate will be expected to comply with.
- Candidates who are selected for an interview will be asked to read the policy prior to their interview.

4. Developing an aware culture and an open and supportive system

It is essential for managers to develop an open and aware culture whereby employees and others can raise concerns about child abuse and be confident of a positive response from managers regarding the concern itself and support for their needs if necessary. An open and aware culture is vital in establishing a child protective environment and is demonstrated by:

- Listening and responding to concerns raised by employees and others including children.
- Regular opportunities for informal discussions
- Observing and responding to signs of anxiety and stress.
- Raising concerns on sensitive matters.
- Providing support to individuals in difficult circumstances.
- Giving and receiving critical feedbacks.
- Clear and open communication.
- Making decisions and taking actions when concerns are raised.

Managers have a responsibility to assess the local management culture in country and ensure an enabling environment exists

for the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy. Raising and reporting concerns, albeit one of the most difficult steps to take, is crucial to dealing with concerns of child abuse and therefore employees must feel that a positive and supportive environment exists.

During the implementation discussions emphasis should be placed on the criteria set out above which describes an open and aware management culture and what will need to change to develop a culture in line with this policy.

Capacity Building

Recruitment, induction, supervision, meetings and debriefing are examples of the systems whereby managers have a responsibility to ensure child protection issues are mainstreamed and fully integrated. These responsibilities can be summarized as follows:

- A minimum requirement of awareness raising and information on the Child Protection Policy and specific local procedures should be incorporated into induction training for new employees and existing employees changing roles internally.
- For employees with direct contact with children and managers with child protection responsibilities regular supervision and support meetings will be the forum to discuss practical questions of child protection.
- Capacity building and on the job training will be organized to support individual needs on child protection matters.
- Regular opportunities to discuss concerns within teams or with colleagues will help develop an open

and aware culture and raise issues at an early stage.

- Debriefings offer an opportunity to discuss child protection matters and concerns.

Support

Where concerns and sensitive child protection matters arise GRT has a duty to provide support to managers, employees and others e.g. through training or via access to professional support and counselling and through ensuring that:

- Employees working in hazardous, stressful and emotionally demanding situations are well trained, supervised and supported.
- All employees and others working in partnership with GRT are committed to the CPP and local procedures.
- Employees and partners have access and support in raising and reporting concerns on child abuse and challenging bad practice.
- Concerns are listened to and responded to in a positive manner.
- Actions taken are discussed (in compliance with the policy) and agreed with management.
- Reports and information are treated with confidentiality and passed on a “need to know” basis
- Training, support and development needs for individuals and teams are identified and provision made.

As part of the implementation process, existing systems for the support and development of employees and others should be assessed with a view to incorporating requirements of the Child Protection Policy.

5. Raising and reporting concerns

Any person working or coming into contact with children, supporting or attending an event organized by GRT, has a responsibility to raise and report concerns on the safety or welfare of children. Employees should report concerns directly to their line manager and/or the Regional Representative in Nairobi according to the detailed reporting mechanism.

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that a clear, detailed reporting mechanism by which concerns can be raised timely and effectively is in place and translated into local language where necessary.

GRT will ensure the interests of anyone reporting such concerns are properly protected and all reports made in good faith will be viewed as evidence of the individual's concern for the best interest of the child and the organization. This will remain the case regardless of the outcome of any subsequent investigation.

6. Developing appropriate procedures It is important for all employees to understand the requirement and method of reporting concerns. Managers will have to ensure the procedures and reporting mechanisms are developed into an effective reporting system.

This may prove to be a simple task in many parts of the organization but where employees are in contact with children, or managing those who are, much greater emphasis will be needed on discussing policy implementation and requirements. The level of contact with children will determine the level of policy implementation but a concern about child abuse can come from any quarter and therefore all employees must be made aware of the issues and have a clear understanding about what to do should a concern arise.

7. Monitoring the implementation of the CPP

Monitoring is important in order to:

- Ensure full implementation across the organization.
- Raise practical difficulties in implementing the policy.
- Identify support needs for implementation and operation.
- Assist with evaluation and review of the policy.
- Ensure gathering information on the policy in practice.



GRT Reporting Tool

If you are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child you must follow this procedure:

What are the circumstances of your concern?

Did you witness child abuse?	Yes	No
Do you suspect someone of child abuse?	Yes	No
Has someone made allegations regarding child abuse?	Yes	No
Has someone disclosed abuse of a child to you?	Yes	No

Does your concern fit any of the following categories of abuse?

Do you think a child may have been neglected?	Yes	No
Do you think a child may have been physically abused?	Yes	No
Do you think a child may have been emotionally abused?	Yes	No
Do you think a child may have been sexually abused?	Yes	No

Your concern is justified if you answered yes to any of the questions above, your duty is to report your concerns to one of the following persons, don't delay – a child may be at risk of serious harm if you do.

Contact person in Somalia

Name:
Title:
Location:
Telephone:
E-mail:

If you have concerns about informing the person in this box please feel free to advise the person in the following box.

Contact person in Kenya

Name:
Title:
Location:
Telephone:
E-mail:

This person will examine the information and, if considered necessary, agree emergency steps and an action plan with timings and responsibilities for the field.



Child Protection Policy Declaration

Declaration by persons under (voluntary or remunerated) contract/mandate with GRT.

I, the undersigned,

hereby declare:

- 1 That I have not in the past been subject to any sentence for individual behavior incompatible with the responsibility of caring for or overseeing children or minors, and have never been subject to any administrative measure of investigation for criminal acts or breach of conduct jeopardizing the physical or psychological integrity of children;
- 2 That I have received and taken due note of the document relating to the Child Protection Policy (child protection procedures and support materials) and that I undertake to respect this policy; this document being continually redefined, the latest version will always be accessible and all members of staff will be adequately advised of any new developments;
- 3 That I have been informed that in the event of suspicion of behavior incompatible with responsibility for children and contrary to the policy of prevention established by GRT, the institution reserves the right to take protective measures involving provisional suspension; that I have been informed that in the event of consistent evidence and known incidents contradictory to the protection of the children placed under my responsibility, the institution shall take appropriate administrative and legal measures, without limit of time or place, both in the country where the incident is alleged to have taken place and in my country of origin and / or main domicile;
- 4 That I have been informed that in the event of termination of contract on the grounds of violation of the physical and / or psychological integrity of children, the institution shall reserve the right to inform other institutions which may apply for professional references of the termination of contract for serious violation of the principles of the protection of children, within the legislative framework applicable to the protection of information.

date : _____

place: _____

Signature: _____