

Jugend Eine Welt Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction: Child Protection

Since 1997 Jugend Eine Welt – Don Bosco Action Austria has been particularly committed to improve the life perspectives, to protect and to enforce the rights of children and young people on the margins of society. The aim of Jugend Eine Welt is to enable a self-determined, dignified and successful life for young people who are in need of special support due to various kinds of disadvantages. With the preventive and holistic approach of Jugend Eine Welt and its partners, the aim is to ensure that disadvantaged children and young people find support in society and improve their situation through their own efforts. In order for them to develop into independent and self-confident individuals, safe and non-violent conditions must be provided. For this reason, and based on the guiding principle "education overcomes poverty", it is the particular concern of Jugend Eine Welt that children and young people from all over the world who are involved in education, development and emergency aid projects are protected from all forms of mental and physical abuse as well as sexual abuse.

Jugend Eine Welt is part of the worldwide Don Bosco movement. The worldwide Don Bosco Provinces are encouraged by their religious superiors to also develop their own child protection guidelines, partner organisations from the Don Bosco movement as well. Jugend Eine Welt also makes sure that organisations which support Jugend Eine Welt develop and apply their own child protection guidelines.

Together with its partners, Jugend Eine Welt is committed to the worldwide realisation of children's rights. We actively support child protection and children's rights, among others within the framework of the "Network Children's Rights Austria".

The actions of the organisation and its staff are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC – 1989) and its Optional Protocols, which prohibit child trafficking, -pornography and -prostitution, among other things. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child forms the basis of children's rights and is based on four central principles:

- Non-discrimination: All children have the same rights. No child may be disadvantaged or discriminated against – regardless of the reasons (colour of skin, origin, nationality, language, gender, religion, disability, parents' assets etc.)
- Priority of the best interests of the child: The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in decisions affecting children.
- Development: All children must be granted the right to life, livelihood and the best possible opportunities for development.
- Participation: Children should be appropriately involved in decisions that affect them and should be able to express their opinions.

2. What is understood by child abuse?

As mentioned above, the overarching framework of national legislation is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines as a child "every person below the age of eighteen years unless national law in force provides for earlier majority". In addition, it should not be left unmentioned that young people beyond this age limit should also be protected from abuse and violence.¹

2.1 Definitions and types of abuse

Child abuse or mistreatment includes all forms of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or commercial or other exploitation that result in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of the child within a relationship based on responsibility, trust or power.²

Five main categories of abuse will be explained:

- **Physical abuse**: is the actual or potential injury to a child or a failure to protect the child from physical harm. Single or repeated incidents may occur.
- **Emotional abuse**: includes the neglect to create a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment to promote a child's emotional and social skills. It also includes actions towards the child that are harmful to his or her health or physical, mental, personal, moral or social development. Serious verbal abuse, rejection, threat, fear, discrimination or physical forms of rejection are also part of emotional abuse.
- **Sexual abuse**: is the actual or threatened sexually motivated touching of a child, i.e. all forms of sexual activity such as indecent touching, sexual intercourse etc. as well as activities without physical contact such as showing pornographic material.

¹ The distinction between children and adolescents differs considerably in the Austrian legal system. According to the Federal Youth Representation Act and the Federal Youth Promotion Act, all young people up to the age of 30 are considered to be youths. For them, the term "young adults" has also become generally accepted.

² World Health Organisation, "Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention", <http://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/65900>, 1999

- **Neglect:** is the temporary or permanent failure to care for a child in terms of health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions. This neglect can lead to a serious impairment of his or her mental, physical or social development.
- **Exploitation:** refers to the commercial or other exploitation of a child through activities carried out for the benefit of others. Exploitation includes child labour and child prostitution, which impairs physical or mental health, prevents the young person from receiving education and disrupts moral and psychosocial development.

3. Measures to protect children

3.1 Field of action

The people who are engaged for and with Jugend Eine Welt are committed in their work and actions to the principles for the protection of children. For this reason, the representatives and partners of Jugend Eine Welt always oppose any form of exploitation, abuse and violence by or against children:

Volunteers:

Jugend Eine Welt promotes international volunteering, especially in Don Bosco projects worldwide. Volunteers make an important contribution to development cooperation and give their time and a future to disadvantaged young people. They often live and work together with children and young people during their work. Furthermore, Jugend Eine Welt offers returning volunteers a voluntary engagement in educational work with children and young people in Austria.

Jugend Eine Welt staff (internal and external):

Jugend Eine Welt staff and external experts act as interfaces between project partners, volunteers, donors and Austrian society and politics. As representatives of Jugend Eine Welt they are concerned about the protection of children and young people in all areas of work.

Project partners:

Jugend Eine Welt works mainly with Don Bosco partners in its international project work. The focus of the programs and projects is the support of disadvantaged children and young people. Within the framework of the unique worldwide Don Bosco network, they are given the chance for a better future, are lovingly received, are allowed to attend school (again), receive an education and holistic care.

Child protection must be actively practised. Especially in an organisation such as Jugend Eine Welt, which comes into contact with children in numerous areas of activity, there must be clear rules and unambiguous measures which support the protection of children, prevent child endangerment and, in the case of exploitation, abuse and violence against children, quickly and effectively restore the protection of the children concerned.

3.2 Preventive Measures to protect children

3.2.1 Employees of Jugend Eine Welt

- All employees of Jugend Eine Welt are aware of the **child protection guidelines** and the **code of conduct**, which are handed out to them when they join the organisation, and are guided by them. By signing this document, employees commit themselves to actively build and maintain an environment in which children are safe and protected, to observe the principles, standards and measures set out in this Child Protection Policy and to follow the Code of Conduct.

- In addition, staff members of Jugend Eine Welt who, due to their area of responsibility, have regular contact with children and young people, or who travel on project trips, must present the criminal record certificate "Child and Youth Welfare" in accordance with §10 Para. 1 a of the Criminal Register Act (maximum once a year).
- All employees receive training in child protection when they join the company. The human resources manager ensures that all employees receive training in the implementation of the policy. This training is binding and must be attended by all employees.
- Jugend Eine Welt appoints a Child Protection Officer to act as a contact person for all internal and external concerns related to child protection and introduces a reporting system for suspected cases (see 3.3.)
- After a legally proven offence in connection with endangering the welfare of children, mistreatment or sexual abuse of children, employment or further engagement with Jugend Eine Welt is not possible.

3.2.2 Project work of Jugend Eine Welt

- In the cooperation agreements and funding contracts with project partners, Jugend Eine Welt always points out the binding nature of child protection in cooperation with the project partners.
- By signing the cooperation agreement, the partners commit themselves to uphold child protection standards in the sense of this guideline and to promote child protection in their organisation. Jugend Eine Welt expects its long-term partners to have their own child protection guidelines and shares with them the guidelines for child protection.
- For referral and emergency projects, Jugend Eine Welt reserves the right to ask for the child protection guidelines of the partners.
- Jugend Eine Welt exchanges views with all partners with whom the organisation cooperates in its project work on their positions regarding active child protection. Jugend Eine Welt regularly informs itself about which preventive measures for the protection of children are implemented by the project partners and which measures the project partners can take in case of abuse.
- If the project partners do not take sufficient measures for child protection, Jugend Eine Welt reserves the right to stop funding.
- Participants in Jugend Eine Welt project trips – regardless of whether they are employees, journalists, sponsors, volunteers or contractors – are sensitised to child protection issues in the run-up to the project trip and receive the handout **"Information for project visits on child protection for participants in project trips"**.

3.2.3 In the area of volunteering

- It is particularly important for volunteers who are on a placement abroad through Jugend Eine Welt to receive orientation and support in all matters of child protection. For this reason, child protection is an obligatory topic in the pedagogical preparation of the assignment. Volunteers are sensitized to the topic of child protection and possible dangers and are familiarized with the rules of conduct for child protection.
- In addition, the volunteers are trained in dealing with possible suspicious cases and learn who they can turn to at Jugend Eine Welt and how they should act in an emergency.
- All volunteers are handed out this child protection guideline and the code of conduct for volunteers by Jugend Eine Welt. The code of conduct aims to ensure a clear standard of protection inside and outside the volunteer's area of assignment. All volunteers sign up to the code of conduct and thus actively contribute to a protected environment for children and other vulnerable people.

- The criminal record certificate "child and youth welfare" is mandatory for all future volunteers abroad who could come into direct contact with children on a regular basis.
- Volunteers who become active in their country after their voluntary service also sign a commitment to comply with the code of conduct.

3.2.4. In the area of public relations and fundraising

When creating and using or publishing reports, film contributions and photos in the context of public relations and fundraising activities, Jugend Eine Welt always places the human dignity, welfare, protection and safety of children at the forefront of its activities. Jugend Eine Welt also endeavours to give children and young people a voice in its public relations work and to make their concerns and interests audible.

In order to meet the special challenges that can arise when reporting on children, Jugend Eine Welt is guided by the recommendations for media reporting on children of the Children's Rights Network as well as the Concord Guidelines for Handling Images and Messages and acts in accordance with the following principles:

- All media content is based on the values of respect and equality and preserves the dignity of the person depicted.
- We strive to present children as personalities with many facets and potentials.
- Before creating potential media content (e.g. photos, videos, texts, sound recordings) of children to be supervised, the consent of the children concerned or of the parents/carers/project managers must be obtained. In the case of general reports on a project, this can be done orally by the reporter himself/herself or, in advance, by the staff in the projects. In the case of detailed reports about individual children, especially interviews, the most comprehensive possible information about the probable purpose and use of the media content and a verifiable declaration of consent by the child or his/her parents or carers is obtained. Whenever possible, the form "Photography/Filming Consent Form" is used for image recordings.
- Should a depicted person withdraw his or her consent at a later date, Jugend Eine Welt will immediately respond to this request.
- The privacy of all persons depicted in the project and project environment is respected at all times when creating media content.
- As a rule, pseudonyms are used for the children, unless it is in the interest of the child concerned and with the consent of the child or the parent/carer/project manager.
- When using images of unclothed or lightly clothed children, utmost caution and sensitivity is required. Photographs of situations that could be misinterpreted in a sexual context are not used.
- The description of the children's life situation is always made against the background of their social, cultural and economic environment.
- The use of images stored at Jugend Eine Welt is analogous to the principles described above, i.e. publication always follows the principles of child protection (even if a subsequent declaration of consent cannot be obtained from the child concerned).

Additional safeguards should be applied to public reporting on children at particular risk, as they may be at high risk of stigmatisation or further violence. Children at particular risk include in particular:

- Children who have been victims of sexual or other violence
- Children affected by HIV/AIDS or other diseases associated with stigma in their society
- Children charged with or having committed a criminal offence

- Child soldiers or children who were soldiers

In such cases, the risks that could result from reporting are carefully assessed.

3.3 Procedure in cases of suspected violence against children

Jugend Eine Welt investigates any suspicion that comes to the attention of the organisation in connection with the activities of its staff, volunteers, other representatives or project partners. For the professional handling of suspected cases, Jugend Eine Welt follows the guidelines of the Child Rights Network for case management in crisis situations.

All decisions are based on the best interests and protection of the child. Rapid access to offers of assistance must be ensured in order to prevent further harm. The case management system for dealing with suspected cases described in this guideline is known to all employees of Jugend Eine Welt and all volunteers. Furthermore, cooperation partners are informed about the procedures of this system.

Basically, three different case constellations are distinguished with which Jugend Eine Welt can be confronted:

- The suspected case concerns a person from the circle of Jugend Eine Welt staff, volunteers who are engaged or working on behalf of Jugend Eine Welt, or persons who carry out an activity or mission for Jugend Eine Welt, such as external trainers, journalists, volunteers, committee members or consultants.
- Employees or persons working in the name or on behalf of Jugend Eine Welt become aware of violence against children in the course of activities or workshops that are outside the direct jurisdiction or responsibility of Jugend Eine Welt.
- The suspected case concerns a project partner or cooperation partner of Jugend Eine Welt or persons who have access to children through the partners.

If incidents concern events outside the direct area of responsibility of its own organisation, Jugend Eine Welt will ensure that these cases are investigated and will hand the case over to the competent bodies or authorities.

If the incident affects the area of responsibility of its own organisations, the case management system of Jugend Eine Welt comes into play:

Case management:

The protection of victims is a top priority. The aim of the case management system is to enable an adequate and rapid investigation of the respective situation in the event of suspected cases and to detect cases of abuse and mistreatment at an early stage.

Any accusation, suspicion or indication of violence, abuse or sexual assault will be taken seriously and will be investigated.

This applies in particular, but not exclusively, to the following situations:

- if reprisals, methods of "black pedagogy" (such as humiliation, punishment, systematic intimidation, etc.), violence/abuse/sexual assaults are observed or suspected;
- if someone is accused of being violent towards children, abusing them or being accused of sexual assault;
- if a child/adolescent speaks about having been abused;

- if a staff member is accused of being violent towards children/young people, abusing them or sexually assault them;
- when children/adolescents attract attention through a lasting change in their typical behaviour and/or the way they form relationships.

All representatives of Jugend Eine Welt are obliged to immediately document every suspected case of child protection violation that comes to their attention and report it to the Child Protection Officer. Documentation and reporting is done using the form "Reporting a Suspected Case" (Appendix). After the report, the Child Protection Officer(s) will carry out an initial investigation of the incident as soon as possible.

It is particularly important to act in a trustworthy manner and to share the information received in confidence only with the people who are responsible for it (primarily the Child Protection Officer). The protection of the child has priority over the investigation of the suspicion at all stages of the case. Likewise, the protection of the whistle-blower must be guaranteed during the investigation.

Jugend Eine Welt does everything in its power to ensure that suspected persons no longer have any contact with children and young people or other vulnerable persons until the allegations are clarified. In consideration of the severity of the suspected case, own employees can also be suspended for the duration of the investigation.

In the area of volunteering, a justified suspicion of a serious violation or disregard of the code of conduct will lead to the immediate termination of the volunteer service. If volunteers witness an assault, it is to be decided at the discretion of the severity of the case whether the voluntary service is to be terminated immediately due to the incident. Jugend Eine Welt will influence the project partner concerned and ensure that the perpetrator cannot commit any further assaults and cannot have any further contact with children.

In the area of project partnerships, a serious violation of child protection means that the cooperation is terminated.

3.4 Tasks of the child protection officer

The management of Jugend Eine Welt is mandated to appoint one or two contact person(s) to take on the role of a Child Protection Officer, or KSB for short, and his or her deputy. The central tasks of KSB are:

- Monitoring and ensuring the implementation of the KSR (child protection policy)
- Monitoring and annual report to the management and the board of directors or at the general meeting and – within the framework of a team meeting – to the employees
- Contact person for suspicious cases as well as support and crisis management
- Interface to all affected parties and external institutions

The profile of requirements for the KSB is given in Annex 5.

4. Concluding note

This guideline is a living document; it reflects the status of June 2019. The standards laid down here are to be reviewed after one year (June 2020) and at regular intervals thereafter and, if necessary, amended to guarantee even better protection for children.

Put into force by the Board Jugend Eine Welt Austria.

Vienna, 1 January 2020