

**Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter- Church Aid
Commission (EOC-DICAC)**

Child Protection policy



**November, 2020
Addis Ababa**



EOC-DICAC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) is a development wing of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; established in 1972 by legal notice No.415. The organization has also been re-registered by the Charities and Civil Societies Agency as a resident charity organization with registration number 1560. EOC-DICAC envisions a just society, in which everyone is able to lead a quality life. With a mission to support vulnerable communities to be self reliant by tackling the root causes of poverty; it has been implementing humanitarian and development projects in various parts of the country since establishment.

EOC-DICAC believes that all children have the right to be safe at all times, and that all children have equal rights to protection from all forms of abuse, EOC-DICAC also recognizes that Ethiopia is one of the signatory countries of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC).

EOC-DICAC, in its longtime engagement in humanitarian and development interventions recognizes that the abuse of vulnerable, especially children, is the common phenomenon worldwide, especially in the developing countries like Ethiopia. EOC-DICAC in this regard commits to contribute to the national efforts of providing a safe caring and trusting atmosphere, where children can learn, grow and live. Putting in place and implementing Child Protection Policy is believed to have a paramount importance in this regard. The implementation of Child Protection Policy (CPP) among other things would help to reduce the risk of various forms of child abuses and to enhance the awareness of stakeholders' civil society organization and the public at large.

In areas, where EOC-DICAC staff and others travel and work, the organization will adhere to and be governed by national and international child protection laws and conventions in relation to protection from all forms of child abuse and child exploitation such as child sex tourism, child labor and child pornography.

Each and everyone, who has connection with EOC-DICAC, would understand the problem of child abuse and his/her own role and responsibilities in protecting children and preventing from all kinds of child abuse. This document sets out EOC-DICAC's Child Protection Policy on working with children and managing issues of child abuse. The policy and guidance provided in this document applies to all EOC-DICAC staff, nationally, internationally and volunteers/seconded and other representative of EOC-DICAC. The policy sets out guidelines and standards, which include but not limited to recruitment procedures, creation of a space for children to speak out and staff training programs that must be put into practice.

2. Scope of the Policy

Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for all EOC-DICAC staff at all levels



(national, regional and projects in the grass root), volunteers, contractors, funding partner, representatives, consultants, advisors and those visiting EOC-DICAC HQ, Diocese Development Program Coordination (DDPC) and project offices. All staff and others engaging with EOC-DICAC will be made aware of the child protection policy and their responsibilities as stated in the policy during their orientation.

3. Definitions

- **Child**

According to the UNCRC and African Charter on the rights of the child, a child is defined as “every human being below 18 years of age.

- **Child abuse**

EOC-DICAC uses the World Health Organization’s (WHO) definition of child abuse which describes child abuse as: “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (WHO, 1999, 2002).

- **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse occurs when a person causes a physical injury or threatens to injure a person. Physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) may be as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether or not the caretaker intended to hurt the child. Although an injury resulting from physical abuse is not accidental, the parent or caregiver may not have intended to hurt the child. The injury may have resulted from severe discipline, including injurious spanking, or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child’s age or condition.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse generally refers to sexual acts, sexually motivated behaviors involving children, or sexual exploitation of children. Child sexual abuse includes a wide range of behaviors, such as: Oral, anal, or genital penile penetration; Anal or genital digital or other penetration; Genital contact with no intrusion; Fondling of a child’s breasts or buttocks; Indecent exposure; Inadequate or inappropriate supervision of a child’s voluntary sexual activities; Use of a child in prostitution, pornography, Internet crimes, or other sexually exploitative activities.



- **Psychological Maltreatment**

Psychological maltreatment also known as emotional abuse and neglect—refers to “a repeated pattern of caregiver behavior or extreme incident(s) that convey to children that they are worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value in meeting another’s needs. Spurning (e.g., belittling, hostile rejecting, ridiculing); Terrorizing (e.g., threatening violence against a child, placing a child in a recognizably dangerous situation are some of the most common emotional abuses

Duty of Care: Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organization and individual to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organization and its individuals to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of or real injury.

Protection: Protection includes ensuring that individual basic human rights, welfare and physical security are recognized, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards.

4. Principles and values

The following principles and values reflect the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission’s (EOC-DICAC’s) position on child protection:

Zero tolerance of child abuse: EOC-DICAC does not tolerate any form of child abuse, nor does it tolerate possession or access to any material that is abusive towards children. EOC-DICAC will not knowingly engage anyone who poses a direct risk to children.

Recognition of children’s interests: EOC-DICAC recognizes that some children are at greater risk of abuse. Of particular vulnerability are children with disabilities, children in conflict situations as well as children in natural or manmade and post natural or manmade disaster situations.

Sharing responsibility of child protection: When bidding for projects in association with organizations that do not have a child protection policy, EOC-DICAC will ensure that associate organizations agree to have or adopt EOC-DICAC’s Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct (Annex 2) for the duration of the project.

Treat children with respect regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status ;EOC-DICAC believes in Creating an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults, Promoting open lines of communication both internally and externally within and between organizations to improve awareness and



implementation of child protection policies and practices; Creating a framework to deal consistently and fairly with allegations concerning both direct and indirect abuses

5. Goal: To protect children from all forms of abuse in the course of our work

6. Purpose: The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to

- provide a management strategy to prevent child abuse and protect children in the course of our work;
- protect EOC-DICAC staff and partners from unfair practices and processes; and
- Provide EOC-DICAC staff and partners with clear guidelines on what to do in the case of suspected child abuse.

7. Considerations in Child Protection

EOC-DICAC will consider the following steps, whenever opportunities favor their employment, as part of its duty to enhance child protection:

Child empowerment and participation: Promoting children's right to participate in the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects meant to assist them and supporting learning opportunities with partners about participatory methods.

Partnership: Promoting partnerships and strengthening the capacity of the Church and CBOs and institutions that closely works with EOC-DICAC to better serve children who need special protection measures.

Learning: Fostering a learning environment by sharing the results of evaluations and partnering in action-oriented research on child protection issues to encourage more evidence-based interventions. To conduct these activities EOC-DICAC has the capacity (time and expertise) and will solicit funds that would help to implement these activities

8. Child protection risk management

EOC-DICAC recognizes that there are a number of potential risks to children in our work, particularly in those programs where staff or others come into contact with children. In recognizing these risks, staff and others will proactively assess and manage risks to children to reduce the risk of harm.

EOC-DICAC funding partners would sign Partnership Agreement outlining child protection responsibilities, which include having their own child protection policy or complying with EOC-DICAC CPP. The staff of EOC-DICAC and Act for Peace staff will assist partners to conduct assessments of child protection needs and implement relevant child protection



strategies as required. Programs/disaster responses that involve direct work with children are considered a higher risk, and therefore require more stringent child protection procedures.

9. Making Child Protection a Priority

EOC-DICAC is fully committed to protecting children.

- EOC-DICAC executive body assumes overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of our child protection policies and procedures.
- EOC-DICAC Board of governance is also responsible in promoting and following the implementation of child protection policies and procedures.
- Managers and senior staff promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals

10. EOC-DICAC's commitment

EOC-DICAC's commitment to child protection among other things will be demonstrated by the following:

Awareness: EOC-DICAC ensures that all staff and partners as well as stakeholders involved in projects are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

Prevention: EOC-DICAC will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that EOC-DICAC staff and stakeholders minimize the risks to children.

Reporting: we will ensure that EOC-DICAC staff and partners are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

Responding: we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns of abuse arise

Further to the above, EOC-DICAC will:

- not permit a person to work with children if it has been identified that they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or well-being;
- take all child abuse concerns raised seriously;
- take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation;
- listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children;



- Work in partnership with parents/careers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children; and
- Regularly review the child protection policy, at least every five years or earlier if needed.

11. Staff Recruitment

The following measures are put to effect in order to ensure that a staff does not put children at risk either through their actions or lack of action.

- Signing the Child Protection Policy Code of Conduct is an essential condition of employment
- Successful candidates and volunteers are required to have a police reference check/Criminal Records disclosure and satisfactory clearance is necessary before they start working in EOC-DICAC. Criminal record checks will, where possible, be conducted for each country in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the last 5 years, and for the individual's countries of citizenship.
- Interview questions for positions that will involve working with children will include behavioral-based interview questions about working with children.
- Recruitment checks will be reviewed when personnel have a change in role. All candidates have to provide 3 character references from outside their family members who have known them for over 2 years. At least two reference checks will be verbal and include a specific question about if there are any safeguarding concerns, and where possible will be with the current/previous employer.
- People responsible for staff recruitment and selection must be familiar with child protection policy.
- EOC-DICAC's child protection policy forms part of the induction given to all new staff and volunteers.

12. General Procedures

The following general procedures will mainstream EOC-DICAC's Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct:

- Both Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct are made an integral part of EOC-DICAC's quality management system and the legally binding instructions it contains.



- Contracts for persons newly employed by EOC-DICAC will contain a provision foreseeing their dismissal to other duties if they breach the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- All EOC-DICAC subsidiaries will be required to develop their own Child Protection Policy that meets the standards of EOC-DICAC's policy or adopt the EOC-DICAC Child Protection Policy.
- A copy of the Child Protection Policy will be posted on the EOC-DICAC website.
- All project offices will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and EOC-DICAC staff will have contact details for reporting.

13. The Investigation Committee

Any reports of suspected or actual abuse of child will be investigated by EOC-DICAC PSEA committee. The committee will be responsible to receive, investigate and finally provide recommendations on sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse on children to EOC-DICAC commissioner or archbishop. Each department and section of EOC-DICAC will have a member of this committee and chaired by the focal person of the Human Resource Department.

14. Guidelines for reporting suspected or actual abuse of children Reporting Procedures

- Reports of suspected or actual abuse of children should be made within twenty four hours or as soon as reasonably possible.
- Reporting suspected or actual child abuse is mandatory for all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants and sub-contractors and board members as well..
- No EOC-DICAC staff or partner will prejudice their own position or standing with EOC-DICAC by responsibly reporting a suspected case of abuse or risk to children.
- Responsible reporting also means that any person making a report should bear in mind that all concerns are allegations until they have been investigated. For this reason, it is important for anyone raising a concern to follow the specific reporting guidelines set out below. In particular, confidentiality is expected within the reporting chain.
- All staff should normally discuss their concerns with their immediate senior manager
- Any information provided to the Senior Manager will be handled with strict confidentiality and who will only take action if breaches of the Child Protection Code of Conduct can be proven conclusively.
- Discussions held with a senior manager should focus on completion of the Child Abuse Report



- the identified risks to the child/children;
- measures to safeguarding children and minimize risk; and
- action/next steps
- Any concerns, allegations or disclosures must be recorded and Records should be detailed and precise, focusing on what was said or observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting.
- In certain instances, there will be the obligation for EOC-DICAC and its staff to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur as a consequence of the reporting procedure. However, if urgent action is required in order to protect children then it may be prior to the reporting procedure.

15. Responding to concerns

- In order to protect children it may be necessary to take immediate action to ensure that the Child Protection Code of Conduct is not broken again and/or that further abuse cannot take place.
- The best interests of the child and the desire to secure the best outcomes for the child should always govern decisions regarding what action should be taken in response to concerns.
- All new EOC-DICAC staff and contractors will have a provision in their employment agreements for dismissal or disciplinary action if he/she breaches the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- EOC-DICAC's Commissioner in consultation with the Executive Committee, will ultimately decide what sanctions will be taken against breaches this will be based on disciplinary procedures in the Human Resource Manual.
- Some concerns may be so serious that they would have to be reported to local authorities and police. In these circumstances, based on, EOC-DICAC will assess on a case-by-case basis what steps to take.
- If the concerns are reported to local authorities, EOC-DICAC staff will assist the authorities wherever possible.

16. Legislation

When handling child abuse complaints, EOC-DICAC will take the issue to the relevant bodies and legislations in Ethiopia, such as the woreda, zonal and regional supreme courts and human rights commission.



17. Training

EOC-DICAC is committed to educating staff and others on the Child Protection Policy, how to reduce risks and create child safe environments. We will promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organization and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work.

As part of its child protection training, EOC-DICAC will:

- provide comprehensive written documents on EOC-DICAC's Child Protection Policy to all new staff/partners;

18. Use of children's images for work-related purposes

When photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, EOC-DICAC staff must:

- before photographing or filming a child, assess and Endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain informed consent from both the child and parents/guardian of the child if he/she is above 14 years or a parent or guardian of the child in case the child is below the age of 14. As part of this it must be explained how the photograph or film will be used;
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.



ANNEX 1 - Code of Conduct

While implementing development assistance activities, EOC-DICAC staff will:

- not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts where, under the law(s) applicable to the child, the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws;
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- not invite unaccompanied children into my home, office or other private place without the permission of their parent/guardian, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible;
- Use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately and never exploit or harass children or access child pornography through any medium.
- refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children
- refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- comply with all relevant national and regional Ethiopian laws such as the labor law in relation to child labor;
- comply with the Child Protection Policy including Use of Children's Images; and
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures. Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during work with EOC-DICAC.

Declaration

I have read the EOC-DICAC code of conduct. I understand it to be an essential component of EOC-DICAC Child Protection Policy and that this policy is available for me to read in full.

I declare that I have had every opportunity to discuss both the code of conduct and the Child Protection Policy with EOC-DICAC representative.



I declare that I understand the code of conduct and agree to comply with it.

Name: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX 2 – Child Abuse Report

If you have knowledge that a child's safety might be in danger or has already been endangered, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. Please note that child protection concerns must be reported directly to the designated contact person within three hours or as soon as reasonably possible. You may wish to complete this form before contacting the designated person in your organization's reporting process or you may wish to complete the report after contacting the designated person. This report is to be used as a tool to develop the most un-biased information-based report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you.

It should only be sent only to the designated contact person. It will be held in a safe and secure place and treated in the strictest confidence

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1. About You

Your name: _____

Your job title: _____

Workplace: _____

Your relationship to the child: _____

Contact details: _____

2. About the Child

Child's name: _____

Child's gender: _____

Child's age: _____

Child's address: _____

Child's guardians: _____



3. About your Concern

Was the abuse observed or suspected? _____

Type of abuse observed? _____

Is this concern based on first hand information or information divulged to you by someone else?
(If so,who?) _____

Did the child disclose the abuse to you? _____

Date of the alleged incident: _____

Time of the alleged incident: _____

Location of the alleged incident: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

