



Child protection policy

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Introduction

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN is an independent, non-partisan and non-denominational organization with international presence that, from a global commitment, fights against poverty and inequality since its birth in 1981, in those territories and populations with greater vulnerability and less access to opportunities to exercise their rights with equality and equity, with special emphasis on children.

An organization highly committed to the idea that the dignity of each one of us, in any society, is only complete when we claim and work for the dignity of all socially and economically excluded people and communities anywhere in the world. A supportive community of sharing values and capabilities, based on dignity, equality and mutual respect.

The purpose of the Foundation, according to article six of its Bylaws, is: "The promotion and collaboration in actions of solidarity, development cooperation and social welfare in general and social and welfare services, with special attention to groups and people in situations of vulnerability, social exclusion, poverty and inequality, with special emphasis on children".

Our work model is based on long-term accompaniment, participating in the social, economic and political dynamics of our areas of intervention and facilitating the joint construction of solutions to generate well-being and inclusion. Within this framework, the target population and protagonist of our work is the community as a whole, with emphasis on children, youth and women, especially in the most vulnerable contexts, where they are forced to overcome the greatest obstacles and gaps to access their rights in equality and equity.

AYUDA EN ACCIÓN works with a generational approach. We do this as a strategy to break with the so-called intergenerational transmission of poverty, with the elements that make it something that is inherited. Therefore, we place as protagonists of our work those groups that can change this inertia: children and young people, who must be helped to find ways to break the vicious circle, in each geographical and cultural context; and especially girls and women, because of their higher level of exclusion and lack of opportunities, and because of their ability to be real drivers of change and welfare not only for them, but also for the communities where they are. And we do this by involving and encouraging the participation of people from different countries and being able to overcome the paradigm of North-South development relations.

As part of our mission, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN is highly committed to the protection and safeguarding of the rights of children and adolescents in its different scenarios of action. We approach the protection of children and adolescents in a comprehensive manner, contributing to the strengthening of comprehensive protection systems for this social group at the national, local and community levels. We promote the social recognition of children and adolescents as persons with rights, in order to avoid situations of violence and sexual or labor exploitation of children and adolescents. Likewise, AYUDA EN ACCIÓN accompanies children in fragile contexts, where they become a particularly vulnerable group, providing protection to children in disaster situations, refugee settlements and migratory routes; and offering care to children who have suffered situations of violence through care systems or shelters.

From all of the above derives the high priority given to the development of a Child Protection Policy that not only places them at the forefront of our action and promotion of their human rights, but also aims to: a) ensure strict compliance, evaluation, monitoring and awareness of the provisions and mechanisms established to regulate and promote good treatment and ensure adequate protective environments for their development and well-being; b) train and sensitize all employees and collaborators of our organization to recognize and understand the different manifestations of violence and the serious consequences and risks of harm to children and adolescents arising from misconduct or negligent practices in the development of our professional practice; c) identify early signs of risk of violence and report them promptly and effectively; d) prevent any act that violates the rights of children and adolescents, minimizing the risks of violation and fostering appropriate environments for a culture of good treatment and non-violence.

Our Child Protection Policy is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its guiding principles, which are included in the working spirit of the organization as expressly stipulated in our Code of Ethics (pg. 6): "Special mention should be made of the rights of children, and therefore the principles and rights contained in the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" will be complied with. 6): "Special mention should be made of children's rights, and therefore the principles and rights contained in the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" will be complied with, since the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN considers the protection of the best interests of children as a priority, showing "zero tolerance" to any form of child abuse or mistreatment".

Challenges and rationale for the actions of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN in the field of Child Protection.

International context

At present, children and adolescents continue to be victims of different forms of violence; they suffer socioeconomic exclusion and discrimination, particularly on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, among other factors.

According to data from the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, it is estimated that every year half of the world's children and adolescents are victims of some form of violence. Nearly three-quarters of the world's children between the ages of 2 and 4 are regularly subjected to physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of their parents and/or caregivers. On the other hand, according to the ILO report (2021), 160 million children in the world are engaged in child labor, 79 million of whom are engaged in hazardous work. For its part, UNICEF has reported that nearly 650 million women worldwide were married as children, one in 10 of them has experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts; more than 200 million girls have suffered female genital mutilation, being victims of harmful cultural practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges and inequalities and generated new needs in a context of increased vulnerability and uncertainty. It has had a health and socioeconomic impact that has disproportionately affected the youngest children, those with special needs, those living in poverty, those from marginalized communities and/or those living in remote and rural areas. In addition, it has aggravated the vulnerability of those groups who face particular risks and difficulties in obtaining protection and assistance due to the discrimination they suffer because of their ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability and sexual orientation.

The policy makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection and that some children face particular risks and difficulties in getting help because of their ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

We must recognize that we are witnessing a context of high exposure of children and adolescents to violence, abuse and exploitation. Children and adolescents can be victims, witnesses and perpetrators of violence, from their own homes, at school, in leisure and recreational activities, in the judicial system and state institutions. In addition, they can be particularly vulnerable to violence manifested through information and communication technologies, which means facing new challenges to adapt and renew the models of approach to phenomena such as cyberbullying, *child grooming*, *sexting* or *sextortion*.

Any form of violence against children has long-term effects, which are often transmitted from generation to generation. Exposure to violence severely affects children's cognitive, physical, psychological and emotional development, and can affect their ability to go to school, socialize and thrive; it can lead to mental health problems, chronic illness, self-harm and even suicide. Furthermore, it has been amply demonstrated that children who were victims of violence during childhood are more likely to develop a violent attitude towards others in adulthood, have poorer educational and employability conditions, and are more likely to live in situations of poverty and exclusion.

Legal basis

As mentioned above, our actions in the area of child protection are guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations on November 20, 1989, which enshrines at the international level the recognition and protection of the human rights of children and adolescents under four guiding principles:

- a) Non-discrimination: all children and adolescents have the same rights.
- b) Best interests of the child: any decision, law or policy that may affect children must take into account what is in the best interest of the child.
- c) Right to life, survival and development: all children and adolescents have the right to live and to have an adequate development.

- d) Participation: all children and adolescents have the right to participate in decisions that concern them, to express their opinions and to have them taken into consideration.

The Convention represented a paradigm shift in the conception of childhood. Children and adolescents are recognized as rights holders and their social citizenship as protagonists of their own lives and with the right to express their opinions and develop as agents of social, economic and cultural change, etc., is recognized. In addition, the doctrine of comprehensive protection is enshrined, considering the right to protection of all children and adolescents against all forms of violence (article 19), discrimination (article 2) and against different forms of exploitation (articles 32-36); the protection of minors in situations of conflict with the law (article 37), in the context of armed conflict (article 38), and in the recovery and social reintegration of victims of violence (article 39). States are the actors obliged to guarantee the enjoyment, exercise and protection of the human rights of children and adolescents. They therefore become providers of services that promote the effective realization of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children and adolescents and their families, but also guarantors of their protection.

More than 30 years after the entry into force of the Convention, significant progress has been made and it is increasingly recognized that children and adolescents are full rights holders with their own particular characteristics.

We also base our work on the provisions of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by Resolution 1,386 (XIV) of the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1959; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in New York on December 19, 1966.

This Policy is also aligned with Resolution S-27/2 A World Fit for Children (2002) and the General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, particularly General Comment 13 on the Right of the Child to be Free from all Forms of Violence, which establishes the protection of children as an absolute priority.

Likewise, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals and indicators that accompany the 2030 Agenda, integrate the basic framework of work for the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, as these promote the rights of children and represent an opportunity to protect all girls, boys and adolescents under the slogan of leaving no one behind.

In addition, our mission takes on special dimensions in the field of humanitarian action, since in these contexts the aggravated vulnerability factors give great relevance to the need for coherent and effective policies for the protection of children and adolescents. Consequently, this policy is also based on and integrates the precepts contained in the Minimum Standards for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in Humanitarian Action (2019, developed by the Alliance for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in Humanitarian Action. We also integrate the Humanitarian Charter, the Protection Principles, the Core Humanitarian Standard and key chapters of the Sphere Handbook into our lines of action in humanitarian contexts.

Specific provisions of particular relevance to Ayuda en Acción:

"The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be subjected to any form of trafficking". (Principle 9 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child).

"Every child has the right, without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, to such measures of protection as are required by his or her status as a minor, on the part of his or her family, society and the State" (art. 24.1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration" (art. 3.1. Convention on the Rights of the Child).

"States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians or other persons responsible for him or her before the law, and to this end shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures" (art. 3.2. Convention on the Rights of the Child).

"States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (art. 12.1. Convention on the Rights of the Child).

"States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child" (art. 19.1. Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The Policy is also supported by the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, commonly known as the Lanzarote Convention, signed on October 25, 2007 and in force in Spain since December 1, 2010.

Positioning, approach model, declaration and commitment.

The Convention recognizes the right of all children and adolescents to have the best possible start in life, to grow up happy and healthy, and to develop to their full potential. This includes the right to live in a clean and healthy planet, a protective and supportive environment, to enjoy a family, to participate and be heard in all matters that affect them as full citizens, to receive a free, quality education that favors their development, to relax, play and enjoy cultural and artistic activities, and to enjoy, respect and preserve the natural environment.

All children have the right to an adequate standard of living and equal opportunities from the first stage of their lives as elements that enable the enjoyment and exercise of other fundamental rights. To this end, and based on the principle of interdependence of human rights, we consider that there are four key approaches that are part of the right to an adequate standard of living: food, health, care and education.

In this sense, strengthening the socioeconomic inclusion of children and adolescents is essential to address the generational transmission of poverty and original disadvantages. Social protection and family support are essential to ensure adequate nutrition and a caring environment.

Similarly, all children and adolescents have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of quality health care and education, regardless of their origin and where they live. However, those who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion or are discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity,

religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or social status are more likely to have difficulty accessing essential services, particularly in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas.

Hence, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN focuses its work on providing them with the right tools and opportunities, from the field of education in a broad sense, food, protection and care through community intervention and capacity building of families and duty bearers, in line also with the General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in particular No. 8, 13, 15 and 19; and with the provisions of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the 2013 Commission Recommendation "Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage", reference documents in providing important tools for reducing child poverty and improving well-being.

Our approach model is based on the comprehensive promotion of rights to overcome the conditions that generate poverty, inequality, exclusion and violence. That is why the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN focuses its work on promoting safe and well-treated environments where people can fully develop with the same opportunities and tools:

- a) promoting education, employment and decent and quality work;
- b) ensuring sustainable access to food and strengthening their livelihoods and capacity to adapt to the challenges of climate change;
- c) offering protection services to people in vulnerable situations and promoting a culture of non-violence and solidarity;
- d) and assisting people affected by humanitarian crises and forcibly displaced persons, meeting their most basic needs, offering protection and providing the necessary means for a rapid recovery of their lives.

Our long-term work model allows us to address the protection of children and adolescents in a comprehensive manner and with a 360º protection approach based on the community for the promotion of safe and protective environments based on the culture of good treatment, self-care and mutual care, which is implemented through the following lines of action:

a) Promotion of rights and responsibilities.

We generate opportunities through the access of children and adolescents to education, health, adequate food, safe water and other universal services, with equal opportunities, without discrimination and encouraging the protagonist participation of children and adolescents in their development,

always through joint efforts with state entities, local governments, companies and the communities where we work.

We promote communities that have material, social and environmental conditions and socio-affective environments that are friendly and respectful of children and adolescents and that allow the full development of their capabilities as individuals and the progressive realization of their civil, social, economic and cultural rights under dignified living conditions.

We promote an affective and conscious co-responsibility in the community, educational and family environments, but also with the rest of the public operators related to children and adolescents, such as health personnel, police, social educators, community promoters, religious leaders, etc.

We implement training programs on children's rights and education with tenderness with parents, caregivers and teachers, as well as awareness campaigns to promote a culture of good treatment and zero tolerance of violence against children. We carry out actions to improve community spaces and environments to create safe recreation and leisure areas.

And we promote the right to free, inclusive, equitable and quality public education as one of the priority lines of work for the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN that includes education in values, the culture of human rights and the promotion of a conscious, supportive and critical global citizenship.

b) Strengthening of comprehensive protection systems at the national, local and community levels.

We work with the States to strengthen their capacities, as guarantors of rights who have the duty to respect, protect, comply with and enforce the principles and standards in force; that of other subjects with responsibilities in the respect and fulfillment of children's rights, such as families, social organizations, private companies, the media; and those of rights holders, that is, considering children and adolescents as subjects with full rights and, therefore, with the power to participate and make decisions in all areas that affect their lives.

We promote and strengthen the creation of community systems for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents, integrated and articulated with the institutional mechanisms of the governing body for the protection of rights in each country. These systems, which are based on the figure of the Community Rights Committees, are oriented towards the promotion of rights, prevention, early detection and referral to the public operators of the system, as well as the accompaniment and training of families. They constitute a reinforced support tool, with great capacity for penetration and adaptation to the specific needs of each context, highly effective in promoting community environments that are aware of and committed to the good treatment and protection of children and adolescents.

Together with local and community governments, we promote protective spaces that contribute to the effective enjoyment of the rights of children and adolescents, such as playrooms, municipal homes for children and adolescents, community recreational areas, early childhood centers, social and sports schools, libraries, among others.

Likewise, we strengthen the capacities and conditions of public operators of the institutional system, at the national and local levels, for the development of adapted and effective models of approach to the different situations of risk and violence under a human rights approach for children and adolescents with a gender equity and intercultural perspective.

c) Equality and girls' rights.

At the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN we prioritize girls and women in all our work. In the contexts where we operate, girls and adolescents are victims of sexual violence, early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, they are discriminated against in the exercise and enjoyment of the right to education and are victimized by harmful cultural practices that represent a serious violation of their human rights at an early age. That is why we directly address the protection of girls and adolescents from situations of gender-based violence and discrimination such as trafficking, female genital mutilation, child marriage, forced fattening or improper relationships.

We conduct awareness campaigns in communities to prevent gender-based violence and discrimination. We promote programs on sex education and healthy affective relationships, prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual and reproductive rights with adolescents and young women. We also implement awareness-raising and training programs on new positive masculinities with adolescents and young men to promote the development of new cultural patterns that

are fully respectful of women's rights and committed to gender equality. We also contribute to ensuring that girls have decent and adequate material spaces and conditions that contribute to their integral development, under equal conditions, such as recreation, rest, health, participation and sports, among others.

We guarantee girls' education and help generate a safe learning environment, removing physical obstacles - such as the construction of gender-segregated bathrooms and toilets - and cultural barriers so that they can fully develop their potential to exercise all their rights and access socio-economic and employment opportunities.

d) Empowerment, participation and protagonism of children and adolescents.

We promote the social recognition of children and adolescents as persons with rights and full citizenship. In this sense, we involve them in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the actions for which they are intended, stimulating their participation and encouraging their self-organization through the formation of participation groups or community-based collectives.

We carry out awareness and training programs for the knowledge and exercise of their rights and for self-care and mutual care through games, sports and artistic activities adapted as key methodologies for learning and promoting participation. We train children and adolescents to be able to identify and detect early situations or risks of violence in their environment.

We work on the generation of a culture of non-violence for which the children and adolescents themselves become caretakers of themselves and their peers. In this sense, through the figure of the Committees of Solidarity Links we stimulate solidarity and the promotion of cooperative values among equals based on respect.

We accompany and strengthen the capacities of children and adolescents so that they can play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of their communities and participate as political actors in the construction of the present and future of their communities and municipalities. In this line, we facilitate the construction of forums and spaces for consultation and discussion for the promotion of municipal public policies that prioritize investment in children.

e) Accompanying children in fragile contexts and protection in disaster situations, refugee settlements and migratory routes.

AYUDA EN ACCIÓN accompanies children in fragile contexts, where they become a particularly vulnerable group, providing protection to children in disaster situations, refugee settlements and along migratory routes; and offering care to children who have suffered situations of violence through care systems or shelters.

We are paying particular attention to children and adolescents in migration contexts, including refugees and stateless persons, who are exposed to risks of abuse and have suffered extreme forms of violence - war, violent conflict, exploitation, human trafficking, physical, psychological and sexual abuse. The special vulnerability of children and adolescents in the context of migration requires additional and specific protection and support, and therefore demands new and improved approaches that include their protagonist participation in their design and response. We take special care to ensure that they are not victims of detention, lack of freedom of movement, xenophobia or exclusion. We ensure that children returning to their country of origin receive quality and warm care services, facilitating their safe return to their communities and strengthening the livelihoods of their families in order to avoid further displacement.

In the context of humanitarian crises, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN continues to apply a needs-based approach, in accordance with humanitarian principles, ensuring that its aid takes into account gender and age, determining factors of specific needs. In this area, one of the pillars of our action is to ensure continued access to safe, quality and inclusive education. It is of great importance to equip children, adolescents and young people with essential skills, to offer them protection and a sense of normality, as well as to contribute to peace, and to promote reintegration and resilience.

Declaration and commitment:

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN is committed to prevent, detect and act forcefully in its field of action against any form of violence against people and especially against children and adolescents.

We promote a zero tolerance policy for all forms of violence and inappropriate treatment.

Through this policy for the protection of children and adolescents, we want to develop a protective and safe environment and promote good treatment of children and adolescents based on the tools that accompany it as annexes, and all those that are developed as part of a process of continuous improvement and learning.

Approaches and principles

For the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, the Convention is the frame of reference for its actions, which means placing the Human Rights Based Approach at the core of our Child Protection Policy, recognizing children and adolescents as full rights holders and participatory agents in the design, implementation and evaluation of our policies and actions.

We base our work on the recognition that all children and adolescents should have the opportunity to enjoy their rights, regardless of their national, ethnic or social origin, sex, language, religious beliefs, political opinion or economic status, whether they have disabilities or any other factor or condition that may serve as a basis for discrimination against them or their families.

Therefore, the incorporation of other approaches such as: Human Development, Life Course, Intercultural Approach and Gender, complement the Rights Approach.

These approaches challenge all policies, plans and programs aimed at children, adolescents and their families, where their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation identify the impact on their development and compliance with the principles of the Convention, thus ensuring that children and adolescents are an effective priority.

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN strongly condemns all forms of discrimination, which have often serious consequences for children and adolescents; we recognize and claim their right to achieve their full development through a life free of all forms of violence, which are multiplied and exacerbated in situations of discrimination.

The Child Protection Policy of our organization is based on the principle of the best interest of the child and is based on the virtue of personal and collective empowerment, the promotion of the social protagonism of individuals and a positive vision of the person, especially children and adolescents in conditions of vulnerability and exclusion.

Our socio-educational intervention is centered on the person and is expressed in the respect for freedom and the promotion of responsibility; personalized, gradual, progressive educational attention, which seeks to promote integral development; active listening and the promotion of participation, since the person is the protagonist of every educational process.

AYUDA EN ACCIÓN promotes a culture of good treatment and works to provide safe and protective environments (at school, family and community levels) that allow for the positive development of children and adolescents, taking into consideration the specific situation of children with disabilities and/or with particular characteristics within their communities that make them vulnerable.

Although for the purposes of practical application of this policy various forms and degrees of violence are defined, AYUDA EN ACCIÓN recognizes that all of them are highly harmful, thus developing a policy based on zero tolerance, and strongly condemning all types of violence exercised against children and adolescents, including peer violence, a phenomenon that we must address seriously and with the utmost caution, defining lines of work that incorporate the principle of the best interests of the child.

Protection, good treatment, self-care and mutual care is a responsibility shared by the entire AYUDA EN ACCIÓN team, the actors with whom we interact, the communities where we work, and the children themselves who participate in the programs, projects, campaigns and activities we develop.

Our goal is also to implement a culture of safe reporting, to ensure that any concern, suspicion or incident related to the protection and good treatment of children is reported in a timely manner, ensuring confidentiality and an appropriate response according to the nature and scope of the particular event. We emphasize the duty of qualified communication that reaches all persons who work or have a relationship of service provision or strategic partnership with the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN and have direct contact with children and adolescents.

As a principle of action, our organization promotes the complementarity and co-responsibility of the parties, in order to:

- a) Maximize the impact of our actions and generate sustainable changes through participation and the search for synergies with initiatives promoted by the beneficiaries of our intervention, donors, local actors and other stakeholders.
- b) Gain and maintain acceptance of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN by communities, local stakeholders and other interested parties.

It is a process of constant building and maintenance of relationships based on trust, credibility and positive institutional reputation with the different actors, especially with those actors who in conflict contexts control or influence access to the affected people and communities, particularly children and

adolescents. Acceptance is the recognition of the added value that our organization brings to the territory, and therefore the consent to develop our activities in the area, based on the perception by third parties that our presence does not jeopardize their particular interests, whether economic, political or otherwise, and above all that we promote safe environments for children and adolescents.

Acceptance, respect and protection are therefore the basis for sustaining our social legitimacy as an agent of change. These are essential prerequisites for accessing people in need of assistance and for implementing our projects, while providing security and protection for our staff.

Scope of application of the Policy.

The Child Protection Policy binds all the people of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN and affects both their working life and their private life. Its scope is integrated into the internal regulations of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN and is linked to the following figures:

- The bonding agreement linking the Trustees to the Foundation.
- The employment contract that relates employees to the Foundation.
- The agreement that links volunteers to the Foundation.
- The agreement that links the social base and prescribers of the organization when they visit the programs and projects.
- The collaboration agreement that links strategic partners with the Foundation and the private sector.
- The service provider contract with the Foundation.

This Policy therefore applies to all employees of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, trustees, strategic partners, private sector, service providers, partners, prescribers and volunteers.

Objectives

The objective of AYUDA EN ACCIÓN's Childhood Policy is to create the conditions to promote, protect and fulfill the rights of children and adolescents, and to generate the best conditions for their integral development, which includes their right to protection against any form of violence.

We must create optimal and safe spaces and environments for the full development of children, spaces in which affectionate treatment, free of any form of violence, and which encourage their autonomy and participation, prevails.

To this end, our Policy pursues:

- a) To ensure that all persons who work or have any type of relationship with the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN understand, accept, ensure, support and promote the fulfillment of their responsibilities regarding the protection and good treatment of children and adolescents.
- b) To ensure that the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN has clear procedures to prevent, report and respond to violence against children and adolescents; and that these are known by all hired personnel and people who have any relationship with AYUDA EN ACCIÓN), establishing safe and transparent channels to report concerns, suspicions or incidents related to protection and good treatment of children and adolescents.
- c) To ensure that the Foundation's personnel who deal frequently with children have the knowledge, experience, technical and emotional skills, as well as a resume and legal certifications, in order to avoid any risk of violation or inappropriate treatment of children and adolescents.
- d) To promote a culture of protection and good treatment of children both in our professional and personal lives, promoting the development of a conscious affectivity.
- e) To raise awareness, sensitize and promote a culture of protection and good treatment of children and adolescents in the workplace, at home and in the community.
- f) To promote safe and protective physical and emotional environments adapted to the needs and particularities of each context, space and group of children and adolescents.
- g) To encourage the participation of children and adolescents as a right, but also as a highly effective vehicle for fostering their trust in the system and the development of self-care and mutual care skills.

Our paradigm is that child protection measures are integrated with active management into our Foundation's processes and systems, including strategic planning, budgeting, contracting, program cycle management, performance management, procurement, to ensure that child protection is a feature of all key aspects of our operations.

Key concepts

Child and adolescent: any person under 18 years of age, unless, by virtue of the law applicable to him/her, he/she has reached the age of majority earlier.

Children with disabilities: Children with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, when interacting with various barriers existing in the context, may prevent their full and effective participation in society, on equal terms with other children.

Discrimination/non-discrimination: Discrimination is the denial of the principle of equal rights for a given social group or its members, based on prejudice and stereotypes. Consequently, the principle of non-discrimination entails the responsibility to ensure that historically excluded individuals or social groups have access to their rights on an equal footing with the rest of the population.

Protection: Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Such protective measures should include, as appropriate, effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary assistance to the child and those caring for the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for the identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of the above-described cases of child maltreatment, and, as appropriate, judicial intervention.

Child protection: The responsibility of organizations to ensure that their own staff, operations, programs and partners do not harm children. AYUDA EN ACCIÓN understands child protection as the preservation of children's integrity and the promotion of safe development environments for girls and boys, in which the rights of children and adolescents and their best interests are respected. This includes the implementation of actions for prevention, detection and response to any form of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Child welfare: We understand child welfare as the realization of the rights of children and adolescents and the materialization of opportunities for each child and adolescent to be and do what they value, in light of their capabilities, potential and skills, achieving an adequate standard of living for their physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, moral, social, economic and cultural development.

Safe environment: one that respects the rights of children and adolescents and promotes a physical, psychological and social environment, including the digital environment, suitable for their development and well-being.

Principle of the Best Interest of the Child: this principle establishes that any decision or measure adopted that concerns or involves a child or a group of children should always be taken prioritizing their rights, interests and needs, listening to them and considering their opinion, according to their degree of maturity, cultural and social context. Promotes the dignity of all children and adolescents without exception, ensures their integrity, their holistic development and the full and effective enjoyment of all their recognized rights.

Integral development: process of growth and learning of criteria and possibilities for life, combining all areas of the person: intellectual, cognitive, rational, technical, artistic, physical-sports, social, relational, emotional and spiritual.

Good treatment: a form of relationship between people based on the feeling of deep respect for others and the recognition of their value and rights, leading to a balanced and empathetic relationship that creates a positive and caring affective environment for the full development and well-being of all. In reference to childhood and adolescence, it implies building a comprehensive educational relationship on the needs and potentialities of children and adolescents, even leading to the development of life skills (resilience, empowerment, cooperativism, solidarity).

Maltreatment / violence: child maltreatment means "all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligence 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", as well as the definition of the CRC (art. 19), "any form of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse...".

Violence against children and adolescents is never justifiable and must be firmly rejected and combated, even in its apparently milder forms, such as physical punishment, and always from an approach of good treatment and mutual care. In addition to having negative consequences on present and future development and wellbeing, abuse connotes the denial of the dignity that all children and adolescents have as human beings.

Forms of violence against children:

1. Neglect or negligent treatment. This is defined as the lack of attention to the physical, psychological and affective needs of children.
2. Psychological violence. This refers to all forms of verbal and psychological aggression that affect the emotional well-being of children and adolescents, such as threats, insults, humiliation, ridicule or isolation.
3. Physical violence. This is the most obvious form of abuse. It includes both intentional and unintentional acts that can cause serious or fatal physical consequences. It is manifested by blows, cuts, burns, mutilations, shaking or beatings, among others.
4. Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. This involves the subjection of a child or adolescent to sexual behavior by a person (adult or other minor), in a context of unequal power, usually through deception, force, lies or manipulation. It has very serious consequences on the emotional, psychological and psychosexual development and well-being of the child, which can be prolonged over time.
5. Bullying and cyberbullying. It is a form of peer violence that consists of behavior carried out by an individual, or a group, that is repeated over time to hurt, harass, threaten, frighten, or pick on another person with the intent to cause harm. It is different from other aggressive behaviors because it involves an imbalance of power that leaves the victim unable to defend him or herself. Cyberbullying is a form of harassment that involves the use of cell phones (texts, calls, video clips), the internet (email, social networks, instant messaging, chat, websites) or other information and communication technologies to deliberately harass, harass, abuse, insult, threaten or intimidate someone. The peculiarity of cyberbullying is that a single aggression that is recorded and uploaded to the Internet is considered cyberbullying because it can be reproduced innumerable and its audience is potentially global.
6. Torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. Refers to "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act

he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, or to intimidate or coerce him or her or others, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity" (art. 1 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).

7. Harmful practices (harmful cultural practices): This is the name given to certain forms of violence against children, which are common in some societies or cultures or traditions and which place sexual and reproductive health and rights at great risk. Such is the case of female genital mutilation, violent initiation rites, forced fattening or forced marriage.
8. Child labor: any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is detrimental to their health and their physical and psychological development. Thus, it refers to work that is hazardous and detrimental to the child's physical, mental or moral well-being; and/or interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the possibility of attending school; forcing them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to combine study with heavy and time-consuming work.
9. Commercial/labor exploitation of children: Subjection of a child to work and other activities intended for the economic benefit of a third party that cause detriment to the child's physical or mental health, education or psychological, emotional and social development.
10. Gender-based violence: Any act of violence based on biological sex or gender identity that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, psychological or sexual harm or suffering.
11. Revictimization: The process by which additional suffering is caused to people who have been victims of violence or whose rights have been violated. Revictimization occurs when the person has to recall the event in a traumatic way or when he/she feels stigmatized, blamed or rejected during the care received by the institutions (in the context of the investigation or the application of protection measures) or during contact with the social environment (media, community, his/her own social circle, etc.). Revictimization increases the vulnerability of the person and, as a consequence, the risk of suffering repeated violence over time.

Institutional mistreatment: violation of the rights and dignity of children and adolescents, produced by institutional action or omission (regulation, program, procedure) or by the individual action of a professional within the institution, involving abuse, negligence and detriment to health, safety, emotional state, physical well-being and proper maturation. It includes the lack of agility in the adoption of measures and resources to protect the minor.

Institutional violence or mistreatment contributes to re-victimize children and adolescents instead of providing the necessary attention required by their best interests, to reinforce their resilience and enhance their good development. We also understand as an act of mistreatment, the passive attitude of any professional who, being aware and witness of any discriminatory or humiliating act carried out on a child, maintains a passive attitude towards such act.

In addition, within the framework of the **Regulations for the management of communications of non-compliance and irregularities**, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN has listed, as a guideline, some of the possible human rights violations that we may face, as well as the indicators or frequent manifestations, which will allow us to identify more clearly possible inappropriate conduct and to trigger

Implementation strategy

For the management and implementation of the measures for the protection of children and adolescents contained in this strategy, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN will have 2 figures and 1 responsible collegiate body.

- A) Focal point for children or person in charge of Child and Adolescent Protection.
- B) Delegate for the Protection of Children and Adolescents of the entity's governing body.
- C) Commission for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.

In each of the National Representations of AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, a Country Plan for the Protection of Children and Adolescents will be designed as a framework for protection and the basis for the adaptation of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN's Childhood Policy to the specific context of work, legislation and institutional or procedural requirements of each country where the entity carries out its mission.

This Country Plan will contain each of the aspects included in our implementation strategy, with the pertinent adjustments, but always respecting the principles, outlines and general action sheets. Each National Representation of Ayuda en Acción must have at least one **Focal Point or person**

responsible for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, who will be, unless otherwise designated, the person responsible for Solidarity Links.

In the application of the measures and the development of the instruments contained in the Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, those persons who occupy positions of management, coordination and responsibility within the organization, both in Spain and in the countries where AYUDA EN ACCIÓN carries out its mission, have an important role to play. In this sense, they shall be obliged to ensure compliance with this Policy in their areas of responsibility and competence. This implies:

- a) Ensure that all employees and volunteers in the entity under their area of responsibility understand the scope and implications of this Policy.
- b) Ensure that all employees and volunteers of the entity under their area of responsibility receive the corresponding training established by the Protection Commission on the protection of the rights of children and adolescents according to the professional profile and conditions of the job.
- c) Ensure that all actions performed within the framework of its responsibilities and in compliance with the entity's mission are carried out in accordance with this protection policy and the corresponding regulatory framework.
- d) Bring to the attention of the Child Focal Point or the Country Protection Officer, as soon as it is known or there is information of indications or suspicions, any type of potential risk or situation of violence against children and adolescents that manifests itself within their area of responsibility.

Childhood Focal Point or Child and Adolescent Protection Officer.

He/she shall be appointed by the Risk Committee, whose members include the management team, to whom he/she shall report with the periodicity stipulated.

It shall be the Foundation's internal coordination point for all matters relating to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this protection policy. In this sense, it shall provide the advice and information required by any member of the entity or external collaborator in relation to the protection of the rights of children and adolescents and the application and compliance with the measures and instruments set forth in this policy.

It shall ensure compliance with protection measures and instruments within all areas and departments of the organization, as well as in all territories and countries where AYUDA EN ACCIÓN carries out its activities. It will provide support and accompaniment to the Heads of Protection in each country for the prevention, early detection and notification of situations of violence against children and adolescents, as well as for the elaboration of the Country Plan in development and adaptation of this policy to the normative framework of reference in each case.

Delegate for the Protection of Children and Adolescents of the entity's governing body.

He/she shall be appointed by the Steering Committee to act as the institutional representative at the highest level within the Protection Committee.

Commission for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN establishes a Commission for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, as a control body that will ensure respect for the rights of children and adolescents within the Foundation and, in turn, will have a consultative nature. It will be responsible for the management and implementation of the measures and instruments it deems necessary to ensure the application and compliance with this protection policy, for which purpose it will carry out monitoring, assistance and advisory activities.

She will be designated by the Risk Committee to whom she will report periodically and to whom she will report directly. He/she will coordinate with the Child Focal Point or Protection Officer.

Structure of the Commission for the Protection of Children:

The Risk Committee, whose members include the entity's Management Team, shall appoint the members of this Committee taking into account their skills and availability for a period of at least three years, renewable. The Committee shall consist of at least five members, including at least the following:

- a) Focal Point Child or Responsible for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.
- b) Protection Delegate of the Governing Body.
- c) Compliance Officer.
- d) Legal advisor or legal manager.

Other positions and managers of the entity may participate in the work sessions of this Committee at the request and proposal of the entity, such as the Human Resources team, union delegates and representatives of the beneficiaries, among others.

Functions of the Commission for the Protection of Children and Adolescents:

- a) To make known the Child and Adolescent Protection Policy of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN and guarantee its compliance, ensuring that all persons linked to AYUDA EN ACCIÓN are aware of the internal regulations related to the protection of children and adolescents, adhere to them and give their agreement by signing them.
- b) Ensure that the relevant coordinating bodies, positions and commands disseminate this Policy through all of the Foundation's communication media and supports.
- c) Promote, in coordination with the Child Focal Point or Protection Officer and the designated Country Protection Officers, the application and development of the measures and tools contained in this Policy.
- d) Accompany and support the different National Representations in the elaboration of the Country Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents as development and adaptation of the present policy to the normative and institutional framework of each territory where the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN operates.
- e) Regularly evaluate the risks of each of the organization's areas, especially those activities and projects in which children and adolescents are directly involved. Through this analysis, the organization's map of potential risks will be updated, classifying and prioritizing those measures of priority action to mitigate or eliminate such risks.
- f) To carry out biannual actions to monitor and control compliance with the Child and Adolescent Protection Policy, within the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN and in its national representative offices and areas of work in those countries in which it operates. As a result of this work, it shall submit half-yearly reports to the Risk Committee and the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

- g) Evaluate and make recommendations and proposals for updating the Child and Adolescent Protection Policy on the basis of the experience acquired and within the framework of a commitment to continuous improvement. The update proposal will be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- h) Intervene and assist in case of abuse or violence against children and adolescents. Receive and manage the complaints and information received through the Complaints Channel and the Alternative Complaints Channel according to the established procedures and in coordination with the Risk Committee.

In these cases the Commission:

- Ensure that all incidents, allegations of mistreatment and any other form of violence and all complaints are recorded and receive timely treatment, follow-up and response in accordance with internally stipulated procedures.
- It will carry out an evaluation and support mission. If required, it will give a hearing to the persons involved and/or give an opinion on the facts committed and on the assistance given to the victims.
- It shall prepare an opinion on each case reported. This opinion shall be included in the annual report to be submitted to the Risk Committee and the Board of Trustees.
- The Commission shall bring to the attention of the competent authorities the facts denounced for violence against children and adolescents in order to determine the responsibilities that may arise.

All persons linked to the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN by an employment, volunteer, collaboration, paternity, strategic partnership or service provision relationship are obliged to collaborate with the Protection Committee when required to do so by the latter.

Participation of children, adolescents and target communities.

In compliance with the maxim that all measures related to the protection of children and adolescents must be adopted taking into account their best interests, which implies facilitating accessible and

adapted channels for them to be heard, AYUDA EN ACCIÓN makes sure to communicate with children and adolescents about its protection policy, so that they understand what to expect from the staff performing actions on behalf of the Foundation.

It also means consulting with children and their families about child protection measures so that they are accessible and appropriate, and it means establishing child-friendly reporting and response systems to protect them from the risk of further harm, such as retraumatization, stigmatization or re-victimization.

In this sense, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN will continue to promote consultative and accountability meetings with children, adolescents and their families in those communities and territories where it carries out its actions. At least once a year, the contents of the tools and measures that provide the organization with its model and system for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents will be disseminated in a friendly, adapted and accessible format.

AYUDA EN ACCIÓN will promote the progressive incorporation of children and adolescents in the processes of design, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of this policy. Likewise, it will continue to encourage their participation and protagonism in the different phases of planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs and actions it carries out. To this end, specific bodies for the participation of children and adolescents may be created in each of the countries where the organization operates.

Tools for the implementation of the Protection Policy

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN has the following catalog of tools that are an integral part of this policy:

1. Risk map.

The identification and mitigation of risks related to child protection is a priority for our Foundation. That is why we have a **Risk Map** that evaluates all levels of action of AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, and includes from the identification of corporate risks to the planning of an activity that involves or has an impact on children:

- Risks associated with the presence of inappropriate profiles within the organization or partner organizations (professionals and collaborators).
- Victimization of people who collaborate in the achievement of the entity's goals.
- Victimization of children and adolescents in violent contexts
- Violence against children in the family environment
- Victimization of children and adolescents in violent contexts
- Risks associated with the inadequate design/management of products/services offered by AeA to children and adolescents and people in vulnerable situations.

2. Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN establishes the framework of reference that should govern the conduct of people linked to the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, under standards of ethics and integrity consistent with the mission, principles and values of the organization, on which our institutional performance is based. Therefore, it applies not only to our employees and volunteers, but also to the organizations with which we collaborate in the territories where we are present, and to the visits of Ayuda en Acción suppliers and partners to the field.

Approved by the Foundation's Board of Trustees, for the first time on March 23, 2018 and subsequently modified on different occasions, the Code of Conduct establishes the guidelines to be followed in the event that we encounter ethical dilemmas in the professional field and constitutes the basic internal regulations that allow us to comply with the internal regulatory framework and the legal obligations to which we are subject.

3. Guidelines on regular contact with minors.

This policy establishes a **Guide on regular contact with minors**, which defines the behavior to be adopted by both staff and collaborators in the different programs and services within the framework of the Child Protection Policy of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN (See Annex 1 Manual of good practices on regular contact with minors).

This guide is based on Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, mentioned above, which stipulates that all appropriate measures shall be taken to effectively protect the child "from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse" especially through reports, investigations, follow-up, preventive measures, among others, and, at the same time, considers the intervention of administrative and/or judicial authorities "as appropriate".

4. Complaints channel.

To make Fundación Ayuda en Acción a safe organization for children, we have, within the framework of our Code of Conduct¹, internal procedures to ensure that we report, record, analyze and respond to allegations, concerns, suspicions or complaints regarding any type of child abuse or mistreatment. All these procedures must be carried out under the principles of speed, confidentiality, credibility and guaranteeing and protecting the privacy and dignity of all persons involved, especially minors.

All our employees and collaborators have the obligation to report any well-founded suspicion or any act of non-compliance with our Code of Conduct as soon as possible.

The Fundación Ayuda en Acción has developed an internal action protocol so that all professional workers and collaborators of the organization know what to do in the event of a suspicion or complaint of violence against a child or adolescent: **Rules for the management of communications of non-compliance and irregularities** and **Rules for the management of investigations of non-compliance and irregularities**.

¹ Documents belonging to the Criminal Compliance Management System-FP.04.07 Regulations for the management of communications of non-compliance and irregularities and FP.04.08 Regulations for the management of investigations of non-compliance and irregularities. Link to the whistleblower channel: <https://report.whistleb.com/es/ayudaenaccion>

5. Alternative complaints channel o.

Additionally, as detailed in our Code of Conduct and taking into account the limited access to the usual complaints channel by some of our beneficiaries in the National Programs due to the context of the territory, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN has foreseen the existence of an **alternative complaints channel**, which includes an annual accountability process.

The follow-up of these actions is an obligation of the country management, with the person in charge of Solidarity Links acting as the focal point for the coordination of this work at the national level.

In addition, when we become aware of an act of violence or violation of rights directed against a child or adolescent by a person who has no contractual relationship or collaboration with the Fundación Ayuda en Acción, it is the duty of our staff to report it to the Commission for the Protection of Children and Adolescents and the Risk Committee, and also to report the case to the relevant local authorities so that the corresponding legal action can be taken and the protection of the child or adolescent can be ensured.

In these cases, it is the policy of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN that it is inadmissible to file a file of this type. Regardless of the circumstances of the fact, and the non-occurrence in the responsibility of the entity's employees, at all times must prevail the principle of the best interest of the child, and the duty to inform and protect our employees.

6. Procedures for adherence to the Code of Conduct and the Children's Policy for strategic partners, collaborators and external agents.

With regard to the relationship with strategic partners, in the Agreement itself, it is explicitly stated to the person that this: *declares responsibly that they have internal protocols that accredit the suitability of the employees placed at the disposal of the intervention of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, and therefore none of the employees who have direct contact with our underage beneficiaries have been convicted by a final judgment for any crime against sexual freedom and indemnity, including sexual assault and abuse, sexual harassment, exhibitionism and sexual provocation, prostitution and sexual exploitation and corruption of minors, as well as human trafficking.*

In addition, our strategic partners will be required to verify by means of Due Diligence that they have transversal policies such as the one on children, which is an indicator of inexcusable compliance; and the acceptance of our Code of Conduct in the agreements signed, with the possibility of termination of the agreement for breach of the Code of Conduct).

In the case of external or subcontracted personnel, the employing institution or company shall be responsible for making the Child and Adolescent Protection Policy known to its personnel and for requesting both the responsible statement and the negative certification from the Central Registry of Sex Offenders and, if applicable, the criminal record certificate, with the commitment to provide a copy to AeA for its knowledge.

On the other hand, our **Procurement Regulations** include the obligation to draw up a contract when professionals or companies are going to have regular contact with minors, or with those services that we consider may involve a risk from an ethical point of view and, therefore, as a guideline, the professional or company is required to adhere to our Code of Conduct, with the possibility of termination of the contract for breach of the Code of Conduct.

Additionally, our regulations establish that when the independent professional services contracted involve direct contact with children linked to our intervention and are provided by a natural person, this person must provide, prior to the formalization of the contract, a certificate of sexual offenses or its counterpart outside Spain, and/or other documents that are required according to the local legal framework, such requirement being duly included in the contract to be signed between the parties.

7. People selection process.

The selection and recruitment of employees, trainees and volunteers should reflect the Fundación Ayuda en Acción's commitment to child protection and ensure that adequate procedures are in place to screen out anyone who does not meet the necessary qualifications to work with children.

It is therefore our duty to ensure that all recruitment is carried out in compliance with child protection requirements, in particular in compliance with Article 53 of the Lanzarote Convention, which stipulates that the candidate who has a mission that brings him/her into regular contact with children must not have been "convicted of acts of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of children".

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, as part of its policy, extends this requirement to all other forms of abuse. To this end, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN will request a sworn affidavit as well as a negative certification from the Central Registry of Sex Offenders and Human Trafficking or similar certificate in the different countries in which we work and, when applicable, also a certificate of criminal record, as established by current legislation, from the people it hires or with whom it establishes a regular collaboration (volunteers and other collaborators) and who due to their responsibilities or spheres of action are in direct contact with minors.

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN has joined the **Interagency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme**, which allows the exchange of relevant information between organizations in the process of selection and hiring of personnel, about the background, behaviors and procedures in which they have incurred in their work in other institutions. This will allow us to be more confident that the people hired are able to participate in activities with children and adolescents.

Additionally, as a human resources strategy, when announcing a vacancy, the description of responsibilities and requirements for candidates shall include respect for and mastery of the basic regulations on the protection of children, as well as the general principles from which this policy emanates. It may also be required, in addition, to the personnel that will be incorporated and must relate with minors, the provision of a Certificate or Psychological Proof that supports the suitability of the person for the assumption of such position.

Likewise, personnel already hired who have direct, repeated and regular contact with children and adolescents must present the Certificate of not having a criminal record for sexual crimes and human trafficking every two years. On the other hand, each professional employed by the Foundation shall be obliged to inform the entity of any change in his or her criminal record for sexual crimes and human trafficking.

8. Guidelines for safe communications, image processing and respect for the right to privacy of children and adolescents.

For the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, the basic working principle regarding the collection, processing and use of information and images of children and adolescents participating in programs, projects, campaigns or other activities, is to respect and protect their dignity and that of their families and communities.

We must always keep in mind children's right to privacy and ensure that neither programmatic activities nor sponsorship, advocacy, communication or marketing activities put their safety at risk. We therefore establish that, as far as possible, at the beginning of the implementation of a program, project, activity or campaign, the general consent of the participants and their families and communities should be sought for the collection of communication materials, jointly agreeing on the possible general messages, the type of appropriate images and the subsequent use that will be made of these communication materials.

All media personnel, photographers and visitors in general must be accompanied by local AYUDA EN ACCIÓN staff during the visit and while maintaining contact with the children and their families. Additionally, individuals or organizations requesting the use of resources such as personal information, photographs, videos or statements from children must sign an agreement on the appropriate use of such materials. Failure to comply with the terms of such an agreement may result in termination of the agreement.

Likewise, it is the wish of the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN to establish some guidelines of special relevance:

- Informed consent must be obtained from the child and written informed consent from the child's parent or legal guardian before any information is collected or images are taken. It should be clearly explained what use will be made of the information and/or images obtained.
- Act in accordance with local culture and traditions when taking images (whether photographs or videos) of a girl, also paying attention to the advice and concerns of country office and/or local partner organization staff.
- Ensure that all visitors to produce communication materials provide an inclusive, safe and well-mannered environment. The child's right to refuse, cancel or stop the interview at any time should be respected.
- Ensure that images project a balanced, respectful and dignified image of children. They should be presented as subjects of rights and agents of change, even if they are in a situation of vulnerability, and particularly in the event of a crisis or disaster, avoiding any kind of sensationalist image and/or one that shows them as passive subjects who are the beneficiaries/recipients of an intervention.
- Do not take images of children who are nude or inappropriately dressed.

- Ensure that interviews on issues related to violence against children and adolescents should be conducted with children who have overcome this situation of violence, thus minimizing the risk of re-victimization.
- In the case of children and adolescents in vulnerable situations who have lived through situations of violence and/or exploitation and where there is a high risk of harm or trauma, alternatives to images (whether photographs or videos) should be used to illustrate the information on these children and adolescents, and under no circumstances should their faces be shown.

In terms of data protection, AYUDA EN ACCIÓN makes it mandatory not to make public any information that could lead to the identification of children and could put them at risk, especially victims of violence. For example: first name, last name, date of birth, address, school, name of parent, caregiver or legal representative, other sensitive information (such as health conditions or other data that may cause stigmatization) or excessive details.

We have also considered, in the area of information and communication technologies, the need to systematically provide adequate and sufficient information and training to our personnel on the appropriate use of ICTs, including social networks and mobile telephony, as well as the installation of firewall software and software to filter and block access to inappropriate and/or offensive websites in all AeA work centers.

In the case of children and adolescents who must use social networks or other types of ICTs in the framework of their participation in programs, projects, campaigns and other activities of the Foundation, the persons responsible for the activity must train them on the risks involved, in order to avoid, for example, that they become identifiable or share their geographic location.

9. Awareness-raising and training activities.

Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN ensures that all employees, volunteers and strategic partners receive training on child protection issues, in order to promote understanding of the need to safeguard and protect children and to fully master the procedures for reporting any concerns related to violence against children.

To this end, all employees and collaborators will receive, at the beginning of their commitment with AYUDA EN ACCIÓN, an in-person and specific induction on Child Protection. At that time they are

given the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct, which they sign, indicating that they have read it, that they understand it and that they undertake to comply with it.

Periodic courses on Protection will also be developed, aimed at addressing specific contexts and issues related to the different spheres and scenarios of action of employees and collaborators, and adapted to their roles and responsibilities, to remind and emphasize internal concepts and procedures. With this, we aim to create an environment of professionals aware of the risks and damages that bad professional practices can generate on children and adolescents, as well as of the environments and situations where violence occurs.

Additionally, the Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN will produce communication materials, of a didactic and playful nature, adapted to children and adults, where the principles and directives of this Policy and the mechanisms and channels of denunciation are explained.

Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement processes.

The Fundación AYUDA EN ACCIÓN incorporates in the framework of its internal audit and control procedures the monitoring, evaluation, audit and updating of the instruments and tools that make up this policy and those other internal documents and regulations that complement them as part of the protection system for children, adolescents and people in vulnerable situations in accordance with compliance with the regulatory framework in each case in which the Foundation operates.

It shall be the responsibility of the Committee for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in coordination with the Focal Point for Children or Protection Officer, the Compliance team and those responsible for Solidarity Links/Protection Officer in each country to carry out the monitoring, evaluation, auditing and internal control actions. For such purposes, the Protection Committee may carry out as many actions as it deems necessary, requesting the collaboration of all professional staff,

volunteers and external collaborators with whom the entity is related to the development of its foundational purposes.

For this purpose, and without being exhaustive in nature, the following monitoring and evaluation actions applicable to internal audit and control are implemented:

1. Questionnaires.
2. Personal interviews with key agents.
3. Complaints and claims mailbox.
4. Periodic follow-up reports.
5. Internal audit.

In addition, on an annual basis, the Protection Committee will prepare an annual report with indications of the actions carried out, as well as the findings, progress, recommendations and proposals for improvement. The entity's risk map will be updated and submitted to the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

As part of the continuous improvement process that will guide the implementation of this Policy, and considering the needs detected from the development of the entity's risk map in protection matters, the following instruments and tools will be addressed during the next phase of implementation of the policy:

1. Action protocol for journalists, communicators and opinion makers.
2. Protocol of action in cases of violence against children, adolescents and people in vulnerable situations.
3. Training program for professionals, volunteers and collaborators of the Foundation in the prevention, early detection and notification of situations of violence against children, adolescents and other vulnerable people.
4. Guidelines document to strengthen the selection processes and ensure the hiring of suitable profiles.
5. Country protocols, adapted to each context and regulatory framework, for the preparation and management of events with minors.
6. Catalog of good practices in the protection of the rights of children and adolescents.

Upon approval of the organization's Child and Adolescent Protection Policy, each Country Representation shall prepare, in coordination with the Child Focal Point or Protection Officer and the Commission for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, a work plan for the implementation and adaptation of the tools and instruments that comprise it, taking into account the nature of the actions carried out and the regulatory framework of each country.

Mentioned regulations.

International legal instruments

Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed on November 20, 1989 and in force since September 2, 1990.

Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, commonly known as the Lanzarote Convention, signed on October 25, 2007.

Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by Resolution 1.386 (XIV) of the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1959.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in New York, December 19, 1966.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in New York, December 19, 1966.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution, "A World Fit for Children" (A/RES/S-27/2) of May 10, 2002.

Resolution A/RES/70/1 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Human Rights Treaty Body:

General Comment No. 8 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006): The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19, 28 (2) and 37, inter alia).

General Comment No. 13 (2011) The right of the child to be free from all forms of violence (CRC/C/GC/13)

General Comment No. 15 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013): The right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (article 24).

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