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Year: 2023



# Child Protection Policy

## Loy Kandahar Reconstruction Organization (LKRO)



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## **1. Purpose of the policy:**

This document articulates LKRO child protection policy and the standard zero tolerance approach to child abuse and child pornography. It produces a framework for managing and reducing risks of child abuse by any person engaged with LKRO and in delivering humanitarian assistance programme or long term development projects.

Under this policy, LKRO is committed to actively safeguarding children from harm and to ensuring that children's rights to protection are fully realized. In addition, LKRO will take necessary measures that those involved in child abusers are not associated with LKRO. e.g., staff, Board members, volunteers, interns, consultants, advisers, official guests etc. LKRO is also committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which provides the foundation for this policy.

## **2. Guiding principles:**

The goal of this policy is "To protect children from abuse of all kind during the course of implementation of LKRO's programme in its operational areas".

This policy document has four guiding principles:

- i. That all Children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- ii. That LKRO adopts a Zero tolerance of child abuse.
- iii. Collective ownership to child protection – everyone has responsibility to support child protection.
- iv. LKRO, its partners (if any) and affiliates (if any) have to meet minimum standards to reduce.

## **3. Scope and application:**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definition of a child will be considered:

***"A person male or female under the age of 18 years unless modified by the law will be considered as child and will thus be entitled to the rights of children"***

Promote the rights of children and protecting them from harm and abuse is the responsibility of all those who will be involved with LKRO in a direct or indirect capacity. This policy will thus be applicable to:

- i. All staff of the LKRO in its current operational areas within Afghanistan.
- ii. All the Governance members (hereinafter referred as "board").
- iii. All volunteers including interns and students on exchange visit/exposure visit (hereinafter referred as "associates")
- iv. Consultant, external experts, and Contractors (hereinafter referred as "associates")
- v. Partner organisations/CSOs – with whom LKRO might work (referred as "partners")

#### **4. Policy and action statement:**

LKRO will fulfill its commitment to protect children from abuse and exploitation through the following approach:

##### **4.1 Awareness raising and capacity building:**

LKRO will ensure that all of its staff, board members, associates, Consultants and partners are fully aware of the issues relating to child abuse, exploitation and the associated risks. Further all of them have the knowledge and capacity to reduce the risk of abuse and exploitation. LKRO will therefore arrange orientation sessions, special trainings and workshop for its staff, board members, partners and associates. Sensitization and awareness on the child protection policy will be made part of new staff and board members induction.

##### **4.2 Prevention of abuse and exploitation:**

LKRO ensure, that awareness raising and sensitization as well as personal and professional conduct of its staff, board members, associates and partners helps in taking necessary measures that minimize the risk of child abuse and their exploitation.

##### **4.3 Reporting and reaction:**

LKRO will adopt necessary measures and will ensure that its staff, board members, associates, and partners have the system in place for reporting any form of abuse and exploitation of children. LKRO will ensure that staffs joining the organization are fully briefed. Likewise organizations or CSOs entering into partnership with LKRO will be required to accept LKRO Child Protection Policy or have to provide evidence that the potential partner has a Child Protection Policy.

##### **4.4 Responding:**

LKRO will ensure that action is taken at all level in order to support the rights of children and protect them from abuse and exploitation. Further staff, board members, associates and partners are pro-actively responding where concern arise regarding children abuse and exploitation.

##### **4.5 Action steps in reporting and responding:**

In order that the above standards of reporting and responding mechanism are fully met, LKRO will take the following steps:

- a) All the concern are taken seriously at the organizational and individual level, and in case of lack of seriousness in reporting and responding, disciplinary action is taken against those responsible for slackness.
- b) Take measures to ensure protection of children who are subject/victim of any abuse or concern including their safety, psycho-social care etc.

- c) Act in an appropriate and efficient way in instigating or co-coordinating with any process of investigation.
- d) Adopt zero tolerance policy – e.g., termination of services of staff, board members, and associates in case they are found in any form of child abuse. Likewise LKRO can terminate partnership with a organization or CSO found with child abuse or in case they are unable to take action against their employee, if they are found involved in child abuse and exploitation.
- e) Demonstrates responsibility to and respect for children by being sensitive in LKRO communication that involve them;
- f) Take measures through strict recruitment procedure in order to minimize recruiting of a person who may pose risk to children or who has been involved in child abuse and violation of their rights.

## **5. Child abuse:**

According to the World Health Organization, *“Child abuse’ or ‘maltreatment’ constitutes ‘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”.*

### **5.1 Forms of child abuse:**

Abuse of a child is anything that causes injury or puts the child in danger of physical injury  
Child abuse can be physical, emotional, neglect, and sexual abuse as described below:

- **Physical abuse:**

Physical abuse occurs when a person intentionally injures or threatens to injure a child or young person of under-18 years. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burn or fractures. Sometime this can be self-harm/abuse, where children try attempt to harm themselves include attempt to suicide. In this case organizations like LKRO need to investigate the reasons, which might be a result of threat or violence from another person. In many cases the abuse and violence against children may be perpetrated by actors within an organization (e.g. teachers, social workers, house parents, peers, sponsors, volunteers). Other abuse and violence will take place outside the organization (e.g. in the community / in society by parents, police, external teachers, shopkeepers, gangs).

- **Emotional abuse:**

Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child or young person’s self-esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.

- **Neglect:**

Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision to the extent that the child's health and development are in danger.

Usually this form of abuse takes place within the family; however, organizations serving or working with children have the responsibility to pro-actively respond to those situations.

- **Child sexual abuse:**

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person of age under-18 is used by an older, adolescent, or an adult for his or her own or another's sexual stimulation or gratification or for economic gain. This is the worst form of child abuse around the world.

## **6. Implementation mechanism:**

LKRO commits itself to adopt and practice the following processes to ensure protection of children from abuse and exploitation.

### **6.1 Vigilance in recruitment:**

All person covered in this policy and explained under the "scope and application" above adhere to follow strict recruitment procedure. LKRO will regularly update its recruitment guidelines to ensure that they accurately reflect safety of children. The standard for recruitment will include

but not limited to:

- a) A clear statement affirmation of LKRO commitment to child protection in all visibility and advertising work.
- b) Adopting best practices of recruitment and selection techniques as per the international standard and compatible to the organizations committed to child protection.
- c) In-depth reference checks (both written and verbal).
- d) Conduct police checks, where it becomes feasible.

Check list and guidelines on recruitment practices at appended at ***Exhibit-A***

### **6.2 Access to information relating to children:**

In case LKRO works on a child-specific programming and it has information relating to children, LKRO will make sure that not everyone has access to details of children; access is only given on the basis of role. Details are held securely and access to the computer systems are protected by passwords.

### **6.3 Communication pertaining to children:**

LKRO will ensure that communications about children should use pictures and language that are decent and respectful. Further LKRO will not disclose children's personal addresses or contact information in all its communication.

### **6.4 LKRO code of conduct on child protection:**

All person explained under the "scope and application" are required to sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct attached as *Exhibit-B*.

### **6.5 Assessment at the programme planning & design stage:**

LKRO will ensure that where any project intervention require working with or involving children, the risk matrix should include risk assessment relating to child abuse and exploitation. For instance risk to children will be included in the project risk mapping while designing and implementing disaster response programming or emergency relief. The same will apply to the partner organization/CSO with whom LKRO might enter into a partnership on a specific project.

### **6.6 Capacity building:**

All the staff and board members of LKRO and those mentioned under the "Scope and Application" will be provided information relating to LKRO Child Protection Policy during their induction. In addition training and workshops will be organized as and when required to sensitize all those, who work with LKRO.

## **7. Reporting obligations:**

### **7.1 Reporting incident:**

It is mandatory for any allegation, belief or suspicion of sexual, physical or emotional abuse by an LKRO employee or those mentioned in the "Scope and Application" to be reported immediately to the Head of Human Resources (Deputy Director, HR and Admin) in the LKRO head office. A child or person reporting the incident must be taken seriously by the responsible officer receiving the report. Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or exploitation. The responsible person at LKRO will ensure that the family of the child is informed of the allegation and action proposed and they should be consulted where possible as to the process to be followed. When concerns arise, all parties will be directed through formal complaints process by the focal point on child protection in LKRO. The focal point may consult with legal counsel/advisor or the local if appropriate, and guide the investigation process accordingly.

### **7.2 detachment of alleged perpetrator:**

In the best interest of the child, it might be appropriate to stand down the alleged perpetrator while an inquiry is initiated. A person who has been detached for the interest of the children

will receive pay and allowances until the investigation is completed. However, it is important that the allegations is not discussed or communicated to any person outside the process until final findings are arrived.

### **7.3 Documentation of the incident:**

LKRO will ensure that, within the person who is receiving the disclosure fully document the allegation within 24 hours of the receipt of the disclosure. This will include documenting time, place, witnesses, and the events into the incident. Sample of the Incident Report is attached as *Exhibit-C*. This report will be used as the basis for investigation and possibly used in court of law if charges are forthcoming.

### **7.4 Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality is extremely important to a fair and effective reporting procedure. It is unacceptable and potentially slanderous for concerns of child abuse to be spread the information throughout the organization rather than being directed through a formal complaints procedure. LKRO will take necessary measures that all actors must understand the importance of reporting lines when concerns arise. Confidentiality protects the child, the notifier, the respondent as well as the organization.

### **7.5 Investigation of complaints**

LKRO will ensure that an internal investigation goes through a confidential, thorough, impartial and prompt process. The investigation may consist of interviews with witnesses and others as appropriate, collection of information about the alleged conduct, gathering of documentation, or other procedures as appropriate. The individual alleged violation of this policy will be given the opportunity to present his/her case. LKRO will hold its determination until the investigation is completed. However, since physical and sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offence, LKRO will be required to notify local authorities in case deemed appropriate.

### **7.6 Reprisal**

LKRO will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against any employee who reports any form of abuse or exploitation, provides any information or other assistance in an investigation.

## **8. Use of Children's photos in communication:**

This clause should be read with 6.3/above. LKRO will ensure that communications about children should use pictures and language that are decent and respectful. Pictures, images, or other material related to children that could compromise their care and protection will not be made available through any form of communication media. Images of children should not be accompanied by detailed information relating to their place of residence. Images with corresponding text which may identify a child must be removed.

**9. Policy review:**

The senior management (Directorate) of LKRO will review this policy after every three years.

**10. Contact person:**

The Head of Human Resources is the contact person for issues relating to child protection pertaining to all reporting, investigation as well as issues relating to staff concerns about child protection.

**11. Authorization:**

This policy is agreed and endorsed by the Directors at Directors' Meeting and approved by the Managing Director.

**12. Affirmation:**

I confirm that I have read and fully understood LKRO Child Protection Policy and I agree to strictly adhere to this Policy. I understand that breach to this policy will lead in termination of my employment and association with LKRO.

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**Name (please print)**

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**Signature & Date**



## **Exhibit- A**

### **Recruitment Guidelines relating to Child Protection**

LKRO's HR Manager is responsible to ensure that child related positions are identified at requisition stage of recruitment. In case, a position has contact with children on a regular basis it must be deemed to be a "child related position". Therefore the recruiting Manager in consultation with Manager –HR will ensure that the following practices are implemented in a true spirit.

#### **• Past History:**

The Recruiting Manager must ask every applicant to provide a complete work history and ensure that there are no suspicious patterns or unexplained gaps in the applicant's work history. Copies of all qualifications must be obtained and retained on the applicant's personal file.

#### **• Interviews:**

If there are any unaccounted for breaks in employment the Recruitment Manager should use the interview to discuss these with the applicant. The Recruitment Manager must inform all candidates that LKRO is a child-safe employer and these questions are standard for all interviews. Likewise questions relating to child protection will be added in the panel question for assessment of every hiring.

#### **• Question for all positions:**

The Recruitment Manager together with Manager-HR should add the following question for the panel members:

- 1) What is your understanding of the LKRO Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct
- 2) How do you think that the LKRO Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct will apply to you in this roles and what steps would you take to comply with this policy

#### **• Questions for child related positions:**

- 1) Do you have any issue and concern working directly with children?
- 2) Have you worked with children before? If so, where, when and what methods you have used to motivate children for their rights
- 3) Please tell us about a time when you were directly working with children and you noticed a child abuse case, what it was and how you managed it?
- 4) Give us an example of where you have acted to protect a child from abuse and exploitation.

#### **• Reference Questions**

The HR Manager of LKRO should inform each referee of the candidate that LKRO is committed to child protection and advise that this question is standard for all reference checks: "Do you have any concerns about recommending this person to work directly with children?"

Reference checks can also be used to raise any issues that may have been cause for concern during the interview process.

**Exhibit- B**

**CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT**

For the purpose of this policy, a child will be considered to be a person under the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is obtained earlier.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree that while implementing LKRO activities I will:

1) That, I will 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.

2) I will not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.

3) I will not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts.

4) Wherever possible, I will ensure that another adult is present when I am working with children.

5) I will not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.

6) I will not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my manager's permission.

7) I affirm that I will not use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras inappropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography.

8) I will refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children).

9) I will keep myself refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities.

10) I will comply with all relevant LKRO policies as well as local legislation, including labor laws in relation to child labor.

11) I will immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures to my line manager.

***Use of children's photo and images in work related-communication:***

In case of photographing, documentary or recording related to official business, I will ensure:

- 1) I will ensure to follow and respect the norms and local traditions, that might restrict taking photos of children.
- 2) I will ensure taking signed consent form the child and his/her parents before record a film, taking a photo or producing an image. As part of this I must explain how the recording, film or photograph will be used.
- 3) I will ensure that movies, documentary, photo and DVD present children with dignity and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- 4) I will ensure that photo, films or images give honest reflection of the context and no exaggeration.

**AFFIRMATION:** I affirm that I have a greater responsibility to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviors that could be construed as child abuse when undertaking LKRO activities. I also understand that any lapse from my side to stop child abuse or exploitation can lead in my termination from LKRO employment or services.

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**Name (please print)**

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**Signature & Date**

**Exhibit- C****Incident Reporting**

Name of complainant:	
Contact details:	
Age:	
Sex:	
Name of alleged victim (if different from complainant):	
Age:	
Sex:	
Name and address of parent or guardian, if applicable:	
Has the victim given consent to fill this form?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
When the incident happened? (add date and time):	
Location of the incident: (exact location e.g. village at district XXX of XXX province)	
Describe the state of the victim (physical e.g. cuts, bruises, lacerations, emotional, and behavior)	
Witnesses' names and contact information:	
Brief account of the incident (in chronological way attach extra pages if necessary):	
Name of accused person or persons:	
Job or title of accused person:	
Organization/employer of accused person:	
Address of accused person: (if known):	
Age:	
Sex:	
Has the incident been reported to the police?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
When it was reported to the police (add date and	

time)	
What was the response, what police did?	
If not reported to the police, does the victim want police assistance, if not, why?	
Has the alleged victim been informed about available medical treatment?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, has the alleged victim sought medical treatment for the incident?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, who provided treatment (please add name of Doctor/Nurse and address if possible)?	
What is the diagnosis and prognosis?	
What immediate security measures have been taken to protect the victim and his family?	
Who is responsible for ensuring safety plan (add name, title and role of the person responsible)	
Details of referrals and advice on health, psychosocial, legal needs of victim made by person completing the report:	
Report completed by: Name & Position with date, time and location from where the report was done	
Has the complainant been informed about the organization's policies and procedures for detailing with complaints?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Complainant's consent for data to be shared with other entities (check any that apply):	Police <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> _____
Date report forwarded/dispatched:	
Mode of submission (e-mail, post-delivery, through messenger etc)	
Name of official addressed to get the report (add name, designation, and location)	