



ADRA

ADRA Network Policies and Procedures

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ADRA Child Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

ADRA strives for a just world that advances children's rights, as defined by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#). ADRA believes that every child and young person has the right to live a life free from any form of violence, and deserves to grow up in a safe, peaceful, nurturing and enabling environment where they can fully exercise their rights. This is one way that ADRA fulfills its purpose "to serve humanity so all may live as God intended."

ADRA has a zero tolerance of deliberate harm towards children and enforces rigorous policies to prevent and respond to these issues.

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Definitions

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| Child | In line with the UNCRC, for the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1). |
| Child Abuse (or Child Maltreatment) | Child abuse (or child maltreatment) is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act, or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their wellbeing, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. |
| Child Protection | For ADRA, child protection measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms or prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment. |
| Child Safeguarding | Child safeguarding is defined in this Policy as the responsibility ADRA (the organization) has to make sure its staff and representatives, operations, and programs do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse. Any concern that ADRA has about children's safety within the communities where we work are reported and responded to appropriately and in line with the relevant network and local procedures. |

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Ensure that all who work for and engage with ADRA are skilled, confident, understand, and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children from violence and engage positively with them in ways that enhance the achievement of our purpose and uphold the Safeguarding Code of Conduct;
- Establish procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behavior of ADRA Representatives that result in violence against a child or young person and/or places them at risk of the same; and
- Commit to making sure that the children we work with are aware of our responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviors of ADRA Representatives, and the routes for reporting such incidents.

This policy is not:

- A practical guide, approach, or strategy for prevention and response to violence against children by community members or child protection programs.

Scope

This Policy applies to all ADRA Representatives, defined as:

- All permanent, temporary, and part-time staff; board members; interns; volunteers; ADRA visitors (including media); contractors and consultants; and sub-grantees (local implementing partners and service providers).
- The Policy applies while in and outside of the workplace during working and non-working hours every day of the year.
- Associating with ADRA means that one must comply with ADRA's standards, even if the standards are higher than one's local context or governing laws.¹

Policy Statement

ADRA believes that all children, regardless of age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, or other diversities have a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. ADRA will not tolerate the abuse of children (defined as under the age of 18) in any form.

¹ These standards are listed in the ADRA Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

Children who come into contact with ADRA's programs and activities must therefore be safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from deliberate or inadvertent actions and failings that place them at risk.²

All ADRA Representatives must use a child safeguarding approach when planning, implementing, and monitoring programs or other forms of engagement with children to help be effective in mitigating and removing these risks.

All concerns about child abuse or poorly implemented child safeguarding must be brought to ADRA's attention and will be taken seriously.

ADRA will conduct rigorous and fair investigations of complaints that indicate a possible violation of this Policy. Responses to child abuse allegations will be survivor-centered, consider the comprehensive needs and safety of all those involved, and actions will be in the best interest of the child. Substantiated allegations of child abuse will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

In part of its commitment to promoting the rights of children, ADRA Representatives are required to raise any concern about children's safety within the communities in which ADRA work and, if in the best interest of the child, will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Commitments to Child Safeguarding

This Policy requires that ADRA and its Representatives:

- Recruit individuals and organizations (all who work with and engage with ADRA) who are suited to work with children while using strict child safe recruitment practices. This should include use of background and criminal reference checks.
- Provide ongoing trainings in child protection, child safeguarding, and on other relevant topics to ensure ADRA Representatives can properly uphold their responsibilities.
- Ensure that all ADRA Representatives are aware of their child safeguarding responsibilities and respond appropriately to child protection and safeguarding concerns.
- Behave appropriately towards children and never abuse the position of trust that comes with being a member of the ADRA network.

² The risk mentioned here includes the risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury and any other harm.

- Identify, mitigate, and attempt to avoid potential situations of risk for children by actively creating a child-safe environment for ADRA's activities.
- Establish and maintain systems which promote awareness of child safeguarding, enable prevention of harm, and facilitate the reporting of and responding to child safeguarding concerns.
- Take action immediately if you identify or suspect that a child is at risk or may be being abused or neglected.

Through these commitments, ADRA makes the agency safe for children and by creating a child safe organization, we honor their rights, our aspirations, and God's intentions.

Guiding Principles to Safeguard Children

One of ADRA's Operating Principles is to "advocate for the basic rights of the people with whom it works, empowering them to speak for themselves." To realize this Operating Principle of ADRA, this Policy sets forth an additional set of principles to inform our child safeguarding efforts. These include:

- 1. Rights of the child:** All children aged under 18 years have equal rights to protection from all forms of violence as declared in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.³
- 2. Equality:** Each child has a fundamental right to life, survival and development. ADRA's processes and programs should provide a basis for ensuring the realization of children's rights to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation.
- 3. Inclusive and empowering:** Children should be empowered to understand their rights in this area, and made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern. All children should be encouraged to fulfil their potential, and inequality and discrimination should be challenged. Moreover, ADRA should promote the active involvement of children in their own protection.
- 4. Non-discrimination:** Children will be assured the right to express their views freely and this will be given 'due weight' in accordance with their age and level of maturity in a manner that is inclusive and empowering. We will not discriminate against the child. The child will be treated with respect irrespective of gender, nationality or ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual preference and gender

³ All children aged under 18 years have equal and fundamental rights to protection from all forms of violence and the right to life, survival, and development as declared in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

identity, family, socio-economic and cultural background, or any history of conflict with the law.

5. Best interests of the child: All decisions regarding the welfare, safeguarding and protection of children, and our decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns and breaches of this Policy will be guided by the principle of “the best interests of the child.” ADRA will strive to ensure their safety, health and well-being including meeting their emotional, psychological and physical needs.

6. Shared responsibility: ADRA’s Representatives have a responsibility to support the care and protection of children by demonstrating the highest standards of behavior in their private and personal lives. Everyone has a responsibility to understand and promote this Policy. ADRA Representatives must do all that they can to prevent, report, and respond appropriately to any concerns or potential breaches of the Policy.

7. Do no harm: ADRA has particular responsibilities to children who come into contact with us. No child must come to harm as a result of their engagement with a participant in an ADRA program or as part of any ADRA fundraising or advocacy campaign, intentionally or unintentionally. We also commit to a physical and online environment which promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and minimizes their risk of harm. In instances where a breach of the policy is reported, we will ensure that investigation, follow-up and support is focused upon the best interests and needs of the child.

8. Open and accountable: We are open and transparent and will hold ourselves to account for our commitment to safeguard children. Safeguarding concerns can be raised and discussed, poor practice and inappropriate behaviors can be challenged and addressed, and our safeguarding measures will be regularly reviewed and strengthened to ensure we remain accountable to children and their families.

9. Accountable to children and affected populations: We have a responsibility to inform and empower children so that they learn about and are better able to exercise their rights to protection. We will work with children and their families, ensuring they understand the essence of this policy, our safeguarding commitment, and their rights, and the means via which they can report policy breaches. We will also involve them in the development of safeguarding measures within ADRA in accordance with their age, gender, abilities, and evolving capacities.

10. Zero tolerance of child abuse: ADRA believes that any form of child abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. ADRA will act on safeguarding and child protection concerns it receives relating to its Representatives or programs and activities, ensuring that our actions are timely, appropriate, and centered on the best interest of the child or young person, taking into account their age, gender and other specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.

11. Confidentiality: All child safeguarding concerns/reports/investigations will be dealt with on a need to know basis and all records will be held securely. Likewise, communication will be confidential and secure to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances and in accordance with applicable law.

12. Timeliness: Given the potential for increased or repeated abuse, timely responses are essential, and the accompanying procedures establish mandatory time limits on reporting and responding to concerns.

13. Lasting impact: This Policy aims to ensure that ADRA's Representatives, especially external partners, are skilled, confident, understand, accept and are well supported in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities and engage positively with children and communities in ways that enhance the achievement of ADRA's Purpose Statement, and overall program goals and commitments.

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments

To remain compliant with this Policy, every ADRA office must exercise due diligence to identify, mitigate, and monitor risks of child abuse through a proportional risk management approach will be implemented through this policy. Child safeguarding risk assessments and mitigation plans can be incorporated into pre-existing assessments, such as a security risk register or a child protection analysis.⁴

- **Operational:** Every ADRA country office must conduct an annual risk assessment that identifies organizational risks that include administrative areas (e.g. staff, information and technology), which include activities from Marketing and Development. In congruence, ADRA must work with partners to maintain a context and referral map to track existing laws, cultural norms, reporting requirements around child protection and known service providers (e.g. child protection services) to refer abused children.
- **Project:** For programs that have direct and indirect contact with children, program teams must assess the level of risk for child abuse to occur and adapt the program design and implement prevention strategies accordingly.
- **Partners** (subgrantees and service providers): In the partner selection process, the ability for the potential partner to comply with the ADRA Safeguarding Framework Policies should be considered. The level of this assessment should correspond with the degree of involvement (contact) the partner will have with children. Findings

⁴ Tools for safeguarding risk management are located in the Safeguarding Implementation Toolkit on ENet: [Operational Risk Management](#), [Program Risk Management](#), and [Partner Risk Management](#).

from this assessment should inform the eventual contract and work plan between ADRA and the partner to strengthen child safeguarding capacity for the partner.

Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns

Conduct and activities that undermine the “Guiding Principles to Safeguard Children” and ADRA’s commitment to maintain a child-safe environment are prohibited and should be addressed as soon as possible under this Policy.

Programmatic concerns may be identified through specific MEAL indicators and used to adapt activities. If ADRA Representatives receive or have a complaint or concern relating to a specific child safeguarding incident (does not need to involve an ADRA Representative), they should report it immediately and not investigate further. If the child is in imminent danger of harm, ADRA Representatives should immediately call emergency services, such as the police or child protective services, before reporting it to ADRA.⁵ Otherwise, ADRA Representatives must report to their Safeguarding Focal Point (or equivalent) within one working day (24 hours) or as soon as possible if security and technology do not allow this deadline to be met.

If the incidents involve an ADRA Representative, the Safeguarding Focal Point must inform their Country Director and the ADRA International Safeguarding Office, the Regional Office, local Board Chair, and any supporting ADRA office as required within the following 24 hours.

The Safeguarding Focal Point, Safeguarding Office and other relevant people will assess the situation for any potential health, safety, and security issues and mitigate serious risks or make referrals immediately. Confidentiality will be balanced with the need to act.

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to the Safeguarding Office, you may report outside of his or her office. Alternative options could include:

- ADRA’s whistle blowing platform (www.adventist.ethicspoint.com).

⁵ Local child protection procedures may differ here if reporting immediate danger would somehow impose more danger to the child and his or her family.

Child Safeguarding Incident or Concern



Disciplinary Consequences

Any substantiated violation of the **Child Safeguarding Policy** will be considered an act of gross misconduct and cause for termination.

Implementation and Monitoring

Adherence to this Policy should be guided by the **ADRA Safeguarding Framework (ASF) Implementation Standards**, where the minimum standards for child safeguarding are stated in this document under Commitments Two, Three and Four.

The local ADRA Board is ultimately accountable for this Policy and the Country Director is responsible for its implementation.

All managers are also responsible to ensure the delivery of this policy and to promote it as relevant in all aspects of their work, to hold themselves and others to account and to help create a safe environment for all.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if needed by the relevant policy review channels.

For additional information on the scope of this Policy and its procedures, please reference the ADRA Safeguarding Policy approved for the network by NetCom on 23 June 2020.

ANNEX I: LIST OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

ADRA Representatives will treat all children with respect and not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate. Therefore, ADRA Representatives must never...

1. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
2. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
3. Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
4. Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse.
5. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive. Verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse of children is in violation of this policy.
6. Behave physically or verbally in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
7. Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from a line manager.
8. Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working.
9. Sleep in the same room as a child with whom they are working with unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from a line manager.
10. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
11. Condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
12. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
13. Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favor to particular children to the exclusion of others.
14. Spend excessive time alone with children and away from others in a manner which could be interpreted as inappropriate.
15. Expose a child to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence.

16. Place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.

17. Hire 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 or which places them at significant risk of injury

ANNEX II: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN COMMUNICATION, MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS FOR ADRA

When photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, ADRA Representatives will:

- Ensure that photographers/journalists/translators are properly vetted, and reference checked;
- Comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- Obtain informed, written consent from the parent or guardian of the child, if they could be personally identified, as well as informed consent from the child, before photographing or filming a child, explaining how the photograph or film will be used;
- Ensure the image or file labels do not reveal identifying or potentially harmful information about a child:
 - Evaluate the risk of using images of children with easily identifiable characteristics (e.g. a wheelchair, school uniforms, etc) – which could make them a target;
 - Avoid taking identifiable photographs of children who are at risk of stigma, retaliation or abuse such as: children associated with armed groups, child survivors of trafficking, exploitation etc;
 - Details attached must not allow a child to be traced to its home / community
 - Distinctive buildings, street signs, landmarks not included in images.
- Ensure all visual images present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner,
- Not show children undressed or in inappropriate poses,
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts, and

ADRA Representatives are not allowed to post images of children who are direct or indirect beneficiaries of ADRA on their personal social media.