



# HAPA Child Protection POLICY

August 2016.

## 1. Purpose of the policy:

This document articulates HAPA 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 HAPA and in delivering humanitarian assistance programmer or long term development projects.

Under this policy, HAPA is committed to actively safeguarding children from harm and to ensuring that children's rights to protection are fully realized. In addition, HAPA will take necessary measures that those involved in child abusers are not associated with HAPA e.g., staff, Board members, volunteers, interns, consultants, advisers, official guests etc. HAPA 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 HAPA's programmer 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 HAPA adopts a Zero tolerance of child abuse
- iii. Collective ownership to child protection – everyone has responsibility to support child protection
- iv. HAPA, 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 HAPA in a direct or indirect capacity. This policy will thus be applicable to:

- I. All staff of the HAPA in its current operational areas within Afghanistan, UK or in the countries HAPA might work in future.
- 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 organizations – with whom HAPA might work (referred as “partners”)

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

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

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

HAPA 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. HAPA 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:**

HAPA 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:**

HAPA 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. HAPA will ensure that staffs joining the organization are fully briefed. Likewise organizations entering into partnership with HAPA will be required to accept HAPA Child Protection Policy or have to provide evidence that the potential partner has a Child Protection Policy.

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

HAPA 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,

HAPA 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 HAPA can terminate partnership with a organization 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 HAPA 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 HAPA 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 Organisation (e.g. teachers, social workers, house parents, peers, sponsors, volunteers). Other abuse and violence will take place outside the organisation (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:**

HAPA 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. HAPA 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 HAPA 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

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

In case HAPA works on a child-specific programming and it has information relating to children, HAPA 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:**

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

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

All person explained under the "scope and application" are required to sign the Child Protection

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

HAPA 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 organisation with whom HAPA might enter into a partnership on a specific project.

## **6.6 Capacity building:**

All the staff and board members of HAPA and those mentioned under the “Scope and Application” will be provided information relating to HAPA 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 HAPA

## **7. Reporting obligations:**

### **7.1 Reporting incident:**

It is mandatory for any allegation, belief or suspicion of sexual, physical or emotional abuse by an HAPA 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 HAPA 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 HAPA 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 HAPA. 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:**

HAPA 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. 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 organisation rather than being directed through a formal complaints procedure. HAPA 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 organisation.

### **7.5 Investigation of complaints**

HAPA 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. HAPA will hold its determination until the investigation is completed. However, since physical and sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offence, HAPA will be required to notify local authorities in case deemed appropriate.

### **7.6 Reprisal**

HAPA 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. HAPA 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 HAPA 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 HAPA 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 HAPA.