

## European Association for Social Innovation

### CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

#### Organization purpose

EaSI, The European Association for Social Innovation is a European network, representing more than 30 organizations from 15 countries which aim is the advancement of Social Innovation in Europe through the development of research and pilot projects, identification and dissemination of best practices, awarding grants and scholarships regarding the social Innovation practices, processes and systems developed in urban and rural areas, public services, third sector, and private sector.

EaSI development domains include:

- Inclusion of vulnerable groups
- Social dialogue and social movements
- Social entrepreneurship
- Rural and urban development
- Public policy and governance
- Technology and digital

By the very nature of our work, the staff members and others may, at times, come in close contact with vulnerable categories of persons, including children. Therefore, EaSI's work is based on the recognition that all human, and especially children and adolescents should have the opportunity to enjoy their rights, regardless of their national, ethnic or social origin, their gender, language, religion, political opinion or financial situation, their different abilities and any other condition they or their family have that could serve as a basis for discrimination.

EaSI firmly condemns all forms of discrimination, which has consequences, often serious ones, for children and adolescents. We have a zero-tolerance to behaviors that can harm children. This includes physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse, as well as exploitation of any kind, including but not limited to exploitative child labour, or child sexual exploitation. The definitions of these terms can be found later on in this policy document.

We recognize that the staff we have, together with our network members have a full and active part to play in protecting children from harm. Therefore, our organization will do everything to provide a safe and positive environment that promotes the social, physical and moral well-being of children through all the projects and programs that we develop.

## Statement of Commitment and Guiding Principles

EaSI has developed this Child Safeguarding Policy aiming to create conditions which minimize the risk of unprotected situations for the children who participate, directly or indirectly, in our programs, projects, actions and activities.

The present safeguarding policy is based on the principles gathered in the following reference documents:

- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC), which provides the international framework for the right to protection from all kinds of violence, discrimination and different forms of exploitation
- [Child Safeguarding Standards](#), from the network Keeping Children Safe
- [Romanian law No. 272/2004 on Protection and Promotion of Child's Right 2004](#)

The Child Safeguarding Policy is committed to and guided by the following principles:

1. Under the terms of UDHR, every human being under the age of 18 is considered a child, unless, under the applicable law, he / she reaches the age of majority earlier.
2. All children, without exceptions of any kind, have the right to be protected against any form of violence and to have their dignity respected. EaSI will take all the appropriate measures so that the child is effectively protected and can develop physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal way, as well as in conditions of freedom and dignity.
3. EaSI proclaims the defense of all children against all forms of abandonment, cruelty and exploitation, and that it should not be the object of any type of trafficking. EaSI sustains that children should not be admitted to employment before an adequate minimum age and that under no circumstances they will be allowed to dedicate to an occupation that could harm their health and impede their physical, mental and moral development.
4. The child has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes the freedom to seek, receive and expand information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, in oral, written, printed or artistic form or by any other means at the child's choice. EaSI guarantees the child the right to freely express its opinion and choice on the issues that concern it, with the child's opinions being duly taken into account, according to their age and maturity. EaSI respects the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
5. The child has the right to education, which must be free and compulsory, at least in elementary grades. Under the conditions of equal opportunity, children have the right to develop their mental skills and the sense of moral and social responsibility. EaSI's actions are governed by the child's best interests.
6. EaSI stands that every child with any mental or physical handicap or disability or suffering from any social impairment, should benefit from the treatment, education and special care required by his or her particular condition.
7. EaSI will work together with its members to promote Child Safeguarding within organizations and Child Protection within the wider community.

8. When possible, EaSI will support the strengthening of the abilities of its members' network, to guarantee that all of its activities (programs, projects, actions) are developed and implemented in a protected, positive treatment environment for children.
9. All representatives of EaSI must prove the highest standards of behavior towards children both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote this policy, meaning that they must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns.
10. All decisions regarding children made by EaSI will primarily take into account the child's best interests.
11. This policy applies during, after and in between the work hours.

### Definition of terms<sup>1</sup>

*Child safeguarding:* is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm children, or expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

*Physical abuse:* actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. it may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

*Sexual abuse:* forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

*Child sexual exploitation:* a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

*Neglect and negligent treatment:* allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and

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<sup>1</sup> Child Safeguarding Standards, Keeping Children Safe, p. 5

provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

*Emotional abuse:* persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

*Commercial exploitation:* exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or, if there are any notable changes, the policy may need to be reviewed more frequently. We, the European Association for Social Innovation, expect that each member of our network to also review their policy every 3 years or more frequently if there are notable changes.



General Director,

Tiago Leitão