

FXB INTERNATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Preamble

- FXB International is a non-profit non-governmental development organization founded in 1989. FXB International is the umbrella body encompassing FXB Switzerland, FXB France, FXB USA, FXB Burundi, FXB Rwanda, FXB Uganda, FXB South Africa, FXB India Suraksha, FXB Mongolia and FXB Myanmar. All these entities share the same vision, mission and program methodology.
- FXB's programs aim to prevent and reduce all forms of violence and insecurity, ensuring a safe, secure and protective environment for children. Children are FXB's primary beneficiaries and it is therefore of the utmost importance that the organization has a clear Child Protection Policy in place to safeguard children from any kind of abuse and to minimize the risk of abuse where it exists. It is also important for all those involved with FXB and the children it cares for, their families and their communities that they are protected in terms of legislation, regulation and ethics.
- This policy also applies to local partners' employees implementing projects and/programs on behalf or in partnership with FXB International.
- In the context of this policy, the term Child Protection is used to describe the values, policies and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. It applies particularly to the duty of FXB and the people and partners associated with FXB – towards the children in their care.

1. Introduction

FXB staff impartially assists communities in situations of extreme poverty without any discrimination regarding race, gender, religious, philosophical or political beliefs. In order to achieve sustainable and dignified development, women and men must have equal rights.

FXB believes that all forms of abuse and exploitation suffered by children are unacceptable. Steps must be taken to protect children from persons with harmful intent. While it is essential to be aware of the possibility of employees, volunteers or partners abusing children, we are committed to working to prevent this.

All employees and volunteers of the organization are aware of the need to be concerned about child protection in all that we do. Any association with any person and /or organization engaging in abusive and/or exploitive relationships with children will be severed.

2. Definitions

The Child Protection Policy conforms to national and international treaties that have the protection of children at heart.¹

FXB views a child as a human being under the age of 18 years. Child abuse is a general term used about situations where the child may experience harm. We differentiate between different types of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and verbal abuse.

¹ In particular the Convention on the rights of the Child (Resolution 44/25, November 1989) but also the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the new United Nations Sustainable Development Objectives.

2.1 Physical Abuse

An act or acts which may result in injury to, or death of, a child.

2.2 Emotional Abuse

Any act or failure to act by the parent, guardian or caregiver which results in impaired psychological and/or emotional functioning and development in a child which may be expressed as anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, depression or delayed development. Emotional abuse is often hard to detect.

2.3 Sexual Abuse

Any act or acts which result in the exploitation of a child, whether with their consent or not, for the purpose of sexual or erotic gratification. This may be by adults or other young persons who are intellectually, emotionally, physically or sexually more mature than the child victim. Types of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to incest, rape, exhibition, sodomy, child prostitution, paedophilia, pornography, voyeurism, and cybersex.

2.4 Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse includes communication by words (i.e. Derogatory name calling by adults or other children, negative criticism, yelling as a form of discipline), vocal tones, racial taunts and accompanying body language and attitudes, which demean a person's worth.

2.5 Neglect

Neglect is what you do or fail to do as a parent, guardian or caregiver that can hurt or cause injury to a child or even cause a child to leave home.

Types of neglect:

- **Physical** – This occurs when a child's essential physical needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child.
- **Emotional** – This occurs when a person's behaviour or words have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child. It is the continuous, repeated and inappropriate reaction to the child's emotional needs. There are two kinds of emotional abuse: emotional abuse and emotional negligence. The first is verbal and emotional attacks on the child, and the child is threatened and sometimes isolated. The second occurs when the child does not receive appropriate attention or when the caregiver allows inappropriate behaviour such as the use of drugs in the child.
- **Failure to provide education** – Failure to protect the basic and secondary education for everyone in the language of his or her choice aimed at the full development of the human personality and a sense of dignity.

2.6 Effects of abuse

The effects of abuse and particularly the long-term consequences for children include the following:

- Death;
- Recurrence of abuse;
- Permanent physical and intellectual impairment;
- Educational and emotional failure;
- Criminal and delinquent behaviour;
- The possibility that the abused in turn becomes an abuser.

3. Child Protection Policy - Management Structure

A Child Protection Officer is appointed in every country where FXB is present by the FXB Country Director. His/her responsibilities are to:

- Oversee and facilitate the implementation of the Child Protection Policy;
- Establish a clear list of what will be done and/or distributed to the beneficiaries (adults and children) through the program they are participating in and ensure that they understand that:
 - no favours can be asked in return for anything that's provided,
 - no one has the power to influence positively or negatively the support received;
- Identify, for each program, 2 trusted people (including at least one woman) to whom beneficiaries have easy access to report, anonymously if desired, any type of alleged violation of the Child Protection Policy or any type of harassment;
- Take the necessary and prescribed steps when reports of a suspected violation of the Child Protection Policy are received;
- Any child abuse or reasonable suspicion of child abuse must be reported. The Child Protection Officer may then involve other agencies, such as social services;
- FXB will conduct internal investigations, but will cooperate with the proper authorities. This will include the National Child Protection Unit;
- FXB will provide the necessary support to its beneficiaries and their families;
- The Child Protection Policy applies throughout FXB, including events such as meetings, outreach and/or awareness programs and workshop/training courses.

4. Personnel Recruitment

All employees, contractors, trustees, officers, interns and volunteers, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long-term, having direct or indirect contact with children will undergo a thorough and standardised recruitment process:

- They will be asked to sign and abide by the FXB Child Protection Policy;
- Successful candidate must sign a declaration of criminal convictions;
- They will be requested to give permission to FXB to do a police check before they are considered eligible for the position they are applying for;
- All applicants must supply two reliable character references and particular attention will be given to any area of concern relating to child abuse. During the interview process, applicants will be asked about previous work with children;
- Attentiveness to suspicious gaps in employment history;
 - All successful candidates will receive a specific training about the FXB Child Protection Policy. They will be given a copy of the policy as well as the [FXB Ethics charter](#), and will be required to sign a declaration that they have received and understood it;
- The Child Protection Policy will be made available to the public via the organization website and by having a hard copy available for perusal in the office;
- Volunteers with the organization will be monitored by the full time staff coordinators to whom they are assigned, to ensure that these policy measures are implemented and adhered to. Where there are concerns, coordinators should inform the Child Protection Officer or the Country Director who will investigate further;
- Training, learning opportunities and support will be given to children, parents, volunteers and employees;
- All employees, parents, children and volunteers will have access to child friendly reporting procedures, including contact details for reporting child abuse.

5. Behaviour Protocols

All employees, contractors, trustees, interns, volunteers and visitors dealing with children should have an appropriate behaviour. **They must never:**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Develop physical / sexual relationships with children;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Condone or participate in behaviour by children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show preferential treatment or favour particular children to the exclusion of other children.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff and volunteers should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

It is important for all staff, volunteers and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these;
- Plan and organize the workplace and the activities so as to minimize risks;
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children,
- Recognize the position of trust in which they have been placed;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between volunteers and staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged;
- Report any form of potential abuse as quickly as possible.

In general it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others unless staff are conducting one-on-one counselling sessions with the child;
- Take children to staff or volunteer place of lodging or go to theirs, outside the clearly defined activities of the program.

The Policy also applies to those in indirect contact with children who have access to information concerning children within the context of FXB projects such as children's names, contact details, photographs, personal information or HIV status.

In the event of suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse all adults whether in direct or indirect contact with children and whether staff, partners or volunteers, must follow the prescribed procedures.

6. Communication about children and respect for private life

- Communication regarding children in our programs should only use pictures that are decent and respectful.
- Websites and other promotional materials should not use scanned images of children without formal permission of the parent(s) / guardian(s) (where possible). This permission must be in writing.
- The field team is not allowed to distribute any audiovisual material to FXBInternational, donors, or the media without the permission of the families involved.
- Personal and physical information about a child that could be used to identify the location of the child should not be used on the organization's web sites or in any other form of communication about the child.

7. Reporting and Reaction Protocol

Should a person within FXB observe or receive any information about actual or suspected abuse within the context of FXB activities, he or she must immediately inform the Child Protection Officer as well as the Country Director. Where appropriate, the matter will be referred for further investigation.

Any person who has knowledge or suspicion that a child is at risk must report this to the appropriate full time FXB staff member who will then consult the Child Protection Officer and Country Director and together they will determine what action to take.

In order that a high standard of reporting and responding is met, all staff of FXB undertake to:

- Take seriously any concerns raised;
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- Deal adequately with allegations from a child: reassure, listen carefully and calmly, try not to repeat questions, do not promise secrecy, etc.;
- Support children, parents, staff or other volunteers who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation;
- Be guided through the child protection process by the principle of “the best interests of the child”;
- Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children;
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

7.1 Reporting child abuse by someone outside FXB

If a staff member suspects that a child is being abused by a family member or other people, he/she must follow the procedure described below:

- Note the date and time;
- Write a report, using the child’s own words as far as possible;
- Note the reason for suspecting abuse;
- Report his/her concerns to the Child Protection Officer and Country Director.

7.2 Reporting child abuse by someone inside FXB

If a teacher/volunteer/parent suspects that a child is being abused by an FXB staff member, the following procedure must take place.

- Note the date and time the suspected abuse was identified;
- Write a report, using the child’s own words as far as possible;
- Note the reason for suspecting abuse;
- Report the matter to the Child Protection Officer and Country Director.

7.3 Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality is of the utmost importance when dealing with issues and concerns regarding possible abuse. FXB staff members/volunteers must exercise extreme vigilance in protecting information and must pass on this information via the reporting process as described. When working with children, the issue of confidentiality becomes very difficult at times. When a child discloses abuse, the person who responds to that cannot promise to keep secrets. For this reason, it is essential to make clear the fact that it may not be possible to keep such information wholly confidential. Ideally this should be done before any such matter arises. A written document or statement could be used to get the child’s permission to share the information with selected other people. The process must be discussed with the child to ensure that he/she knows at all times what to expect.

7.4 Confidential record-keeping

Any concerns, allegations or disclosure must be written down at the time or as soon as possible after the concern has been raised. Records must always be signed and dated.

Detailed records are very important especially where the child is disclosing abuse or making an allegation. Every detail of the alleged abuse should be recorded and all subsequent actions be documented.

Records must be kept in a safe place where it is not accessible to everyone. If possible, the records must be locked away. Information may only be shared with relevant parties and it must always be done in such a way that the confidentiality is maintained.

8. Ramifications of Misconduct

- In a case of an allegation by a named individual from a verifiable source, the accused individual shall be suspended (on full pay if relevant) pending outcome of an independent investigation.
- Disciplinary steps which may be taken including further training (in the case of minor violations), dismissal, reporting to the police and legal actions.

9. Declaration

- I certify not be subject to any criminal convictions.
- I declare that I have read and understood the contents of the Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents herein.

Signed at on the..... of..... 20.....

Country:

Name and Surname :

Capacity:

Signature :

Country Director signature :