

Child Protection Policy

Organisation: Društvo za istraživanje i potporu (DIP)

Approved by: Management Board of DIP

1. Introduction

Društvo za istraživanje i potporu (DIP) acknowledges its duty to protect all children involved in its activities from harm. As an organisation dedicated to promoting inclusion, social participation, and the well-being of vulnerable groups, DIP is committed to ensuring that children are safeguarded in all aspects of its work. This Child Protection Policy has been developed based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Eurochild's Child Protection Policy, and the Keeping Children Safe International Child Safeguarding Standards. It serves as a guide to ensure that all DIP activities, personnel, and partners operate with the highest regard for children's rights and safety.

2. Our Commitment

DIP believes that every child has the right to grow up in a safe and supportive environment, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any form of harm. We are dedicated to upholding children's rights regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, or background. Our organisation commits to promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and child empowerment, ensuring that children's voices are heard and respected in decisions affecting their lives. We further commit to proactive prevention, timely intervention, and appropriate responses to any concerns or violations.

3. Scope of Application

This policy applies to all DIP staff members, management board members, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, and any individual representing or engaged by DIP. It also extends to all programmes, activities, and projects organised or supported by DIP, whether conducted locally, nationally, or internationally.

4. Key Definitions

A child is defined as any individual under the age of eighteen years. Child abuse encompasses physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Child safeguarding refers to the measures and processes put in place to ensure that DIP, its staff, programmes, and operations do no harm to children and actively prevent and respond to any safeguarding concerns.

5. Principles and Values

Our work with and for children is guided by the following principles:

- **Child-Centred Approach:** Children's best interests are the primary consideration.
- **Non-Discrimination:** All children are treated equally and with respect.
- **Participation:** Children are encouraged and supported to express their views.

- **Accountability:** DIP ensures that all actions are transparent and that safeguarding measures are consistently applied.

6. Preventive Measures

DIP undertakes stringent preventive measures to minimise the risk of harm to children. Recruitment processes include mandatory background checks, the verification of references, and interviews that assess candidates' attitudes toward child protection. Staff, volunteers, and associates receive child safeguarding training upon joining and periodically thereafter. Programmes are designed following thorough risk assessments, ensuring that potential risks to children are identified and mitigated. All partnerships are assessed for safeguarding compatibility, and partners are required to adhere to DIP's standards.

7. Standards of Conduct

All individuals associated with DIP must uphold the highest standards of behaviour towards children. They must:

- Treat children with dignity and respect.
- Create an environment in which children feel safe and valued.
- Maintain professional boundaries and avoid situations where they are alone with a child without appropriate authorisation or supervision.
- Obtain informed consent from children and guardians when collecting personal data or media material.
- Report any safeguarding concerns promptly and appropriately.

It is strictly forbidden to:

- Engage in any form of sexual activity with a child.
- Use language, behaviour, or media content that could be perceived as abusive or degrading.
- Exploit, shame, humiliate, or otherwise harm a child.

8. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

DIP encourages and requires immediate reporting of any suspicions, disclosures, or allegations of child abuse. Reports should be made to the designated Child Protection Focal Point. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process, protecting both the child and the reporter. DIP will act swiftly, conducting internal investigations and, where necessary, reporting cases to the appropriate authorities. We commit to supporting affected children and ensuring that reporting mechanisms are child-friendly, accessible, and culturally sensitive.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The Management Board holds ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The Director ensures operational oversight, while the designated Child Protection Focal Point coordinates safeguarding actions, offers guidance, and manages incident reporting. Every individual engaged with DIP shares a collective responsibility to uphold and implement this Child Protection Policy.

10. Communication and Media Use

DIP commits to the responsible use of images, recordings, and personal data of children. Consent must be obtained from the child and their legal guardian before any collection or publication of such material. Children's identities and personal stories will be handled sensitively, ensuring they are not placed at risk through public exposure.

11. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

DIP will monitor the implementation of this policy through annual reviews, staff feedback, and regular evaluations of safeguarding practices. Lessons learned will inform policy updates. The policy will be reviewed at least every two years or sooner if significant changes in safeguarding legislation or standards occur.

12. Conclusion

By adopting this Child Protection Policy, DIP reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the safety, dignity, and rights of all children engaged in our activities. We pledge to build a culture of protection where children are safe, heard, respected, and supported to reach their full potential.

Signed:

President of DIP

Marta Berčić

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