



ALIMA's Child Protection Approach

At ALIMA, we believe that all staff, volunteers and visitors must own the responsibility of child protection. This is formalized through our principles, values and internal policies.

Our principles and values are the foundation of how people work every day whether in the field or at headquarters.

When it comes to the specific matter of Child Protection, by the nature of our medical activities and our trained medical professionals, we come from an informed position when it comes to the protection of Women and Children. Our activities often see the effects of abuse first hand and require to deliver 1st response treatment. Our daily activities are set up in a manner that ensures protection through:

- Patient flow
- Separate wards
- Specific questions asked in the recruitment of staff working in pediatric and women's wards
- Specific attention given to the protection of survivors of sexual and domestic violence (female staffing, patient circuit organized from a protection point of view, anonymity, secure archiving of files, ...)
- Outside of medical activities: lighting around latrines and water points, separate male and female + children latrines,

The protection of patients is at the heart of best practice medicine, and is included in all our medical guidelines, but we are not all doctors, and we need to ensure that at all levels protection is mindfully put at the center of our work.

We have therefore developed a Child Protection risk analysis and management guide to help teams remain vigilant and mindful of the impact of their decisions on children, whether they are patients or not.

Introduction

All ALIMA representatives (ALIMA staff, board members, volunteers, and contractors at the HQ and field level) will conduct themselves in a manner that promotes children's rights and protects children from harm.

Children are at risk from abuse from a variety of sources. It is the responsibility of all ALIMA representatives to minimize this risk by setting a positive example, undertaking active prevention efforts, identifying and managing potential risks and responding to allegations of abuse. The code of conduct describes the basic expectations of ALIMA representatives, particularly regarding their contact and dealings with children.

All ALIMA representatives will be required to sign an undertaking to comply with the code of conduct.

All the partner organizations on the Alima platform are required to sign an undertaking to comply with this code.



Core Principles

ALIMA has identified four core principles that relate to child abuse and exploitation and the conduct of humanitarian and development workers:

1. Exploitation and all forms of abuse of children by humanitarian and development workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Where a humanitarian or development worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding any type of child abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via the prescribed ALIMA reporting mechanisms (refer to Abuse Policy).
3. Humanitarian and development workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents exploitation and all forms of abuse of children and promotes positive staff conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.
4. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.

ALIMA Representatives Undertaking

ALIMA representatives will act at all times to ensure children's safety and protection.

Specifically ALIMA representatives will:

- take action to inform themselves and others on the ALIMA policy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- maintain and promote a safe environment for children to participate in ALIMA's activities;
- treat all children and young people with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the values of ALIMA;
- provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers;
- respect cultural differences;
- encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers and ensure that children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them;
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- comply with all relevant international and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;
- report any concerns or allegations of child abuse according to the prescribed ALIMA procedures;
- at all times ALIMA staff should be transparent in their actions and whereabouts;



- take responsibility for ensuring they are accountable and do not place themselves in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made;
- self-assess their behaviours, actions, language and relationships with children; and
- speak up when they observe concerning behaviours of colleagues.

ALIMA representatives will not:

- engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children;
- use inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, offensive, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person;
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes;
- invite unaccompanied children into their home/hotel, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- sleep close to unsupervised children;
- smack, hit or physically assault children;
- physically punish or discipline children (excluding my her/his own children);
- engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts. I understand that mistaken belief of the age of the child is not a defence;
- behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child;
- participate in or condone any behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children;
- hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way;
- seek to make contact and spend time with any child or young person outside the program times;
- use Alima's computers, mobile phones, video or digital cameras inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children or to access child pornography through any medium;
- hire minors as domestic or other labour 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.

Use of children's sounds and images for work-related purposes

When recording, photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, I must:

- before recording, photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- before recording, photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child (where feasible) and a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this I must explain how the recording, photograph or film will be used;
- ensure recordings, photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;



- ensure recordings and images are honest representations of the context and the facts; and
- ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

A breach of the Code of Conduct or breach of Alima's child protection procedures are grounds for disciplinary action, may lead to dismissal from employment or service, and may result in legal proceedings.

Child protection Risk analysis and Management

Objective of this risk analysis and management process:

Identifying the potential for an accident or incident to occur and taking steps to reduce the possibility of it occurring.

What is Child Abuse?

In keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child in this policy is a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse is defined as an act by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that endanger a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development.¹ Child abuse can be a single incident but usually takes place over time.

Child abuse is primarily understood as acts committed by adults or older adolescents against children. However it is also recognised that certain actions or the failure to act by governments and other authorities can breach children's rights and can result in serious harm to children. ALIMA will work to promote the responsibility of State Parties and other duty bearers to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children.

ALIMA classifies child abuse according to five main types.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse involves a sustained pattern of verbal abuse and harassment that results in damage to a child or young person's self-esteem or social competence. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, constant criticism, belittling, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.

Child Sexual Abuse

¹ Definition of child abuse is taken from Australian Institute of Family Studies, Fact Sheet: Child Protection in Australia. Children See. Children Do. Make your Influence Positive. 2008



Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own or another's sexual stimulation or gratification, or economic gain. This can also include exposure or failure to prevent the exposure of children to all forms of pornography and sexual acts.

Neglect

Neglect is the deliberate denial to provide a 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 at risk.

Exploitation

Exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child.

There are two main forms of child exploitation that are recognised:

Sexual exploitation: the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another as well as personal sexual gratification.

Examples: Child prostitution, trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation, child pornography, sexual slavery.

Economic exploitation of a child: the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. Economic exploitation implies the idea of a certain gain or profit through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. This material interest has an impact on the economy of a certain unit, be it the State, the community or the family.

Examples:

Child soldiers and the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflict, child bondage, the use of children from criminal activities including the sale and distribution of narcotics, the involvement of children in any harmful or hazardous work.

Risk assessment in 4 steps:

1. **Identify risks** to children within your organisation (and partners if there are). Make sure you involve all personnel in the organisation in this process, including children. Involving as many people as possible is also a way to not miss a risk that is obvious from one perspective but not from another one.
2. **Group risks** to children that you have identified in Step 1 according to where they might occur in the organisation. The following are only suggested areas of risk. You may wish to come up with alternative categories.
 - a. *Staff and volunteers* (e.g. lack of proper screening in recruitment and supervision, management systems, training on how to handle children)
 - b. *Place / physical environment* (e.g. fire exits, recreational areas, cooking facilities, sleeping arrangements)
 - c. *Activities and programs* (e.g. education, health, community outreach, vocational training, outings, exchange visits)
 - d. *Information* (e.g. storage of children's personal information, recording of allegations of abuse, dissemination of information on where to get help)



- e. *Organisational culture* (e.g. consultation, communication systems, hierarchy, attitudes to organisational learning)

This process will help you analyse the risks more systematically and will also help to identify who is responsible for each area of work where risks to children have to be managed.

3. **Rank the risks** in terms of *low*, *medium* or *high* risk using the guiding questions:
 - a. What / how bad would the consequences be? (This takes precedence over the second question as a deciding factor)
 - b. What is the likelihood of these consequences occurring?

4. **Decide on next steps:**
 - a. Do nothing (no action needed - low risk & benefits outweigh risks)
 - b. Monitor more closely for a set period in order to make a more informed decision (low risk)
 - c. Change activities / policies / plans / procedures to reduce risk (medium to high risk)
 - d. Stop doing the activity or procedure (this may include transferring an activity to another organisation that is better equipped to undertake it, or stopping altogether) (medium to high risk).

You can use the below tables in order to report on the above steps, and also to keep track over time and allow for monitoring and evaluation of your practices when it comes to

Area of Risk	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk
staff & volunteers			
Place / physical environment			
Activities and programmes			
Information / communication			
Organisational culture			
Partner organisation (ie you can then develop also into staff, offices, activities, ...)			

Number each risk in the above table.

For each risk, identify and write down a course of action using the following grid.

Risk No.	i) Do nothing (low risk)	ii) Monitor closely and review again: specify time period & who is	iii) Change activities/policies/plans/procedures to reduce risk: specify action to be taken, time period & who is responsible (medium to high risk)	iv) Stop the activity /hand it over to another organisation: specify action to be taken,	Who is responsible for following up on this action	When will this be reviewed?



		responsible for monitoring and review (low risk)		time period & who is responsible		
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
.....						