

FLAIR's Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

Annexure 2

DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF IEC MATERIAL AND PUBLICATIONS INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS PARTICIPANTS

CODE OF CONDUCT¹

A. APPLICATION OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS WORK

FLAIR has a responsibility to the children and young people we represent to tell their stories in a responsible and ethical manner. The child's best interest should always be our primary consideration. We work with children and communities from all backgrounds, including those in extremely vulnerable and difficult situations. We want people to be motivated to support the cause of children for whom we develop IEC and training materials. To do this, we need to show the situation and circumstances that children face in a way that creates an emotional response and compels people to act to make the world a better place for children. However, in doing so we must respect the dignity and humanity of the children we serve and we must not exploit their situation in order to raise funds or attract attention for our cause. Children and young people have all the rights of adults. In addition, they have the right to be protected from harm. Developing IEC and training materials for the issues of children and young people carries this added dimension and restriction, especially in the current digital era when it is nearly impossible to limit a story's reach.

This document is meant to support the best intentions of ethical functioning of the creative and communications teams of FLAIR – serving the public's interest for truth without compromising the rights of children. In some instances, the act of portraying children places them or other children at risk of exploitation, retribution or stigmatization. When in doubt, we must err on the side of caution and ensure the right of the child to be protected from harm.

¹ Partly adapted from Save the Children's Child Safeguarding Policy

B. OBJECTIVES

- To protect the rights of children and young people physically, mentally, ethically and emotionally and to ensure they are not exploited.
- To ensure good quality media and communications professionalism.
- To protect media and communications workers from accusations of improper behavior.
- To ensure children are protected from harm and are safe to live healthy and happy lives

C. FLAIR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Guidelines for interviewing children

1.1 Do no harm to any child. Avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental or insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.

1.2 Ensure that the child and guardian know they are talking with a IEC Material developer (Photographer, Videographer etc). Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.

1.3. Assess any potential risks to the child or children, including: a) Reprisals, b) Stigmatization, rejection or attacks by family or communities, c) Legal prosecution, d) Misguided or malicious attempts by outsiders to "rescue" the child from a difficult situation.

1.4 No staging: Do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history. Do not ask children to promote products contributed by corporate supporters.

1.5 Obtain permission from the child and her or his guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and understand they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually ensured only if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.

1.6 Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including pressure from the interviewer. In film, video and radio

interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story. Ensure that the child will not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

1.7 If a child discloses bad practice during an interview (such as abuse, criminal activity or a violation of FLAIR's policy), the person carrying out the interview should know the local procedures for reporting this. Staff should also be familiar FLAIR's Child Safeguarding Policy.

1.8 No payments or any other form of compensation are to be provided to children or parents in exchange for their interview, photo or consent.

2. Guidelines for developing IEC and training material on children and writing research reports

2.1 Do not further stigmatize any child. Avoid categorizations or descriptions that expose children to negative reprisals – including additional physical or psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection by their local communities.

2.2 Always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image.

2.3 Do not give any information that could lead to a child being identified or traced. For example, if the child is from a small village, it might be easy for the child to be identified by another villager. Provide the region or district where the child lives, rather than naming the village. Do not name the school the child attends. Use first names only.

2.4 Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as: a) A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation, b) A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse, c) Charged or convicted of a crime, d) A current or former child combatant, e) HIV positive, living with AIDS or has died from AIDS, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives fully informed consent, f) Or any child who does not wish to be named and identifiable, or whose parent/guardian does not wish the child to be named and identifiable.

2.5 Always change the name and consider obscuring the visual identity of a child identified as: a) An asylum seeker, a refugee or an internally displaced person, b) A beneficiary of FLAIR or FLAIR's sponsoring agency or FLAIR's Associates' programmes, c) Orphaned, abandoned or

separated from parents/guardians. In the case of orphans, please be sure to mention when they are in the care of relatives or guardians.

2.6 Do not change a child's identity when it is important to the child and the story. In certain cases, using a child's identity – name and/or recognizable image – is in the child's best interests. However, when a child's identity is used, he/she must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals. Some examples of these special cases are: a) When a child initiates contact with the media and communications worker, wanting to exercise their right to freedom of expression and to have their opinion heard. b) When a child is part of a sustained programme of activism or social mobilization and wants to be so identified. c) When a child is engaged in a psychosocial program and is claiming their name and identity as a part of their healthy development. d) When a child has died and the parent/guardian wants the child's name to be used in order to raise awareness of a problem or change policy.

2.7 When changing a child's name to protect their identity, ask them at the time of the interview what name they would prefer to be known as. If the child does not state a preference for a certain name, work with someone from the community to select a name that is culturally appropriate given the child's gender, ethnicity, religious background, etc. Whenever possible, choose a name that is short and easily pronounced/understood by an audience that may be unfamiliar with the child's culture.

2.8 Confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both.

2.9 When in doubt about whether a child is at risk, report on the general situation for children rather than on an individual child, no matter how newsworthy the story.

2.10 Do not invent a tragic future the child may face "if we don't help". If the child's image or story are to be used in this way, the child and parent or guardian must see the creative treatment and give additional consent.

3. Guidelines for use of videos and photos including children

Quality Indicator Definitions

3.1 Clarity – Please take clear photos and videos, test sound quality and write conversationally while remaining grammatically correct.

3.2 Composition – Videos, stories and images should convey a story with a clear beginning, middle and end or imagery that conveys emotion or action.

3.3 Context – Include setting or background for the story or reference that references FLAIR’s work. Describe the problem we are trying to solve or the solution to a problem. For example, distributing books at a library or conducting a workshop on Child Online Protection.

3.4 Compelling – Take pictures and videos that would make you want to stop what you are doing and take action.

Compliance Indicators Protection

3.5 Coverage (No private parts, ever. Very strict discretion around shirtless children to ensure asset does not serve as fodder for pedophiles.)

3.6 Dignity (Is the subject portrayed as a helpless victim, or as a brave survivor who is contributing to his/her own success?)

3.7 Care (Children in grave health or dangerous situations are not to be depicted without care – e.g. a baby alone and crying; under attack, severe acute malnutrition, fresh wounds or extreme physical trauma) x Released (Releases are required, some verbal in case of emergencies. Releases include informing the subject of the intended use of the photo and protecting the identity of high-risk children such as those in conflict settings, exploited workers, former slaves and those affected by deadly infectious diseases including HIV/ AIDS and Ebola.)

D. SAFEGUARDING

- 1.** At FLAIR we are committed to the protection of children from harm at all times and recognise the potential role we have to play in supporting safeguarding processes within the local communities where our media and communications work takes place.
- 2.** We also believe that the highest standards of media and communications ethics and principles must be upheld at all times. As such, we will seek to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all respondents throughout our research.
- 3.** The only exception to this is, in line with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 and Protection of Children for Sexual Offences Act, 2012, where a child discloses that they have been harmed or that they are at risk of harm, or the interviewer suspects this is the case. In which instance the communications/creative team member should inform FLAIR’s Safeguarding lead and follow the FLAIR Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.** Ajay Kumar Sinha (Executive Director) will take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding / child protection issues that arise during our media and communications work.

This includes providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with other staff, and working with other agencies.

5. If the media and communications person and/or Safeguarding Lead has reasonable cause to suspect that a child they have come into contact with during the research, either directly or indirectly, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm a referral must be made to the appropriate authority without delay and in order that the child can be protected if necessary. This is likely to be local social services via their first contact line, but could also be the police.

6. If it is suspected that a child's health or development is being impaired or there is a high risk of impairment (such as, malnourishment or depression) without intervention, the researcher and/or Safeguarding Lead must make a referral according to procedures set out by FLAIR's Child Safeguarding Policy or the relevant Local Child Welfare Committee, as the case may be.

7. If a professional intermediary has been involved in the commissioning, recruitment or set up of the media and communications, the media and communications staff/consultant/volunteer/intern should, while respecting the child's confidentiality, seek to ascertain the level of any involved intermediary's awareness of the child's needs and if in any doubt that the child's needs are not being met the researcher and/or Safeguarding Lead must make a referral according to procedures set out by FLAIR's Child Safeguarding Policy or the relevant Local Child Welfare Committee, as the case may be.

8. Throughout any suspected safeguarding issue, the media and communications staff/consultant/volunteer/intern must ensure that any disclosure of a confidential nature, which may be potentially harmful to the child or young person, must be dealt with in a sensitive and responsible manner.

Accepted and Signed

Name of the Representative/Stakeholder: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____