

Policy: Child Protection

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Associated instruments/policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> (Cwlth) ▪ <i>Collections Act 1966</i> (Qld) ▪ <i>Charitable Fundraising Act 1991</i> (NSW) ▪ PiCCA Constitution ▪ The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness ▪ The Istanbul Statement on CSO Development Effectiveness ▪ The Australian Council for International Development's Code of Conduct ▪ PiCCA Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 5 Volunteering with PiCCA Projects Abroad Policy 7 Use of Images & Videos Policy 8 Countering Human Trafficking Policy 12 Risk Management Policy 16 Code of Conduct

1. Overview

Partners in International Collaborative Community Aid Ltd ('PiCCA') is committed to the protection and empowerment of children. PiCCA commits to ensuring that its own organisation and practice are safe for children. It seeks to minimise and manage the risk of abuse to children in the delivery of PiCCA's activities. It also seeks to empower children, their parents, caregivers, communities and PiCCA partners to enhance a culture of child protection in the areas in which it works.

2. Application

This policy applies to all Directors (Board Members), PiCCA Members (including those who volunteer for or visit a PiCCA project overseas) and partners. This policy does not replace any laws relating to child protection activities.

3. Definitions

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse: includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying, child labour and exposure to domestic violence.

Child exploitation: one or more of the following:

- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child;
- possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material;
- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming;
- using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification or some other personal or financial advantage.

Child exploitation material: material, irrespective of its form, which is classified as child abuse material or child pornography material.

Child protection: an activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly that arising from child exploitation and abuse.

Contact with children: working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either as part of a designated role or due to the nature of the environment.

Grooming: behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity.

Harm: any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

Informed consent: ensures the child and their parent or guardian understand the implications, purpose and potential uses of photographs or videos.

Neglect: the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a child with the necessities of life where the caregiver is in a position to be able to provide such.

Working with children: being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working' includes volunteering or other unpaid works.

4. Policy

4.1. PiCCA adopts a "zero tolerance" approach to child abuse, exploitation, harm and neglect. In all actions concerning children the best interests of the child will be the primary consideration of the PiCCA Board.

4.2. PiCCA affirms that all children in all circumstances have the right to feel and be safe and to live free from violence, abuse, exploitation, harm and neglect. PiCCA will always act to promote the safety of children.

4.3. Because they are among the most vulnerable members of the communities in which we work, children deserve the protection of organisations which have the ability to impact upon their welfare.

4.4. PiCCA recognises the factors that present a high risk to child safety and protection include:

4.4.1. Children who

- are very young
- have been abandoned, orphaned or otherwise without a carer
- have a disability
- have been displaced
- have experienced conflict or have been abused.

4.4.2. Workers (including volunteers) who

- have not been screened carefully, including police checks
- are not supervised adequately.

4.4.3. Locations which are

- isolated, secluded or otherwise difficult to access
- experiencing political unrest or threats to security
- overcrowded
- home-based.

4.4.4. One to one interaction

- physical contact

- unsupervised visitors
- people working alone.

5. Implementation

PiCCA commits to protect children from abuse, exploitation, harm and neglect in its own organisation and practice by:

Risk and risk management

5.1. Recognising that while it is not possible to entirely eliminate risks of child exploitation and abuse, through careful management PiCCA can identify, mitigate or reduce the risks to children from any PiCCA activity.

5.2. Any project involving or including children will be assessed for risks of harm, abuse and exploitation. Appropriate risk mitigation strategies will be implemented.

5.3. All PiCCA Directors, Members and Volunteers who visit projects overseas will be provided with risk identification information on working with children as part of pre-departure preparation and the requirement that they maintain professional standards of behaviour around children.

5.4. All PiCCA Directors, Members and Volunteers who visit projects overseas are required to sign a Project Visit Brief & Undertaking form which sets out the purpose of the visit and provides copies of: PiCCA Policy 16: Code of Conduct; Policy 3: Monitoring PiCCA Projects; Policy 7: Use of Images and Videos ; and Policy 13: Child Protection. They will sign an undertaking that they have read and understood PiCCA's Code of Conduct and the policies outlined above and that they agree to act in accordance with the Code and policies.

Screening of PiCCA Members and volunteers

5.5. PiCCA's Directors, Members and Volunteers who may work with children in any of its projects overseas must have a current 'working with children check'. The details of these checks, including expiration dates, will be recorded in PiCCA's electronic register.

Training and communication

5.6. All PiCCA Directors and Members (including those representing PiCCA as a volunteer or in visiting a project) will be specifically briefed about the central importance of child protection to PiCCA.

5.7. PiCCA will conduct regular awareness sessions/training for PiCCA Members on child protection and on PiCCA's policies in that regard. A record will be maintained of the dates of these sessions and who attended.

Informed consent for images

5.8. Ensuring that when photographing or filming children for PiCCA-related purposes, PiCCA will always obtain and keep a record of informed consent from a parent/guardian, only take and use images which show children in a positive light and will always be aware of how images of children might be adapted or viewed.

Reporting and investigating

5.9. PiCCA will always act on and report any allegation of child harm, exploitation, or abuse drawn to its attention from any source.

5.10. PiCCA will immediately investigate any allegations of child harm, exploitation or abuse made against any PiCCA personnel or Member in the implementation of PiCCA's work.

Sanctions on PiCCA Members and Volunteers

5.11 If a PiCCA Member or volunteer is subject to an investigation concerning a child protection matter that person will immediately be prevented from working with children until the investigation is finalised

5.12. While a report of harm or potential harm will be dealt with fairly, a breach of this policy may invoke significant sanctions, as deemed appropriate by the Board. These sanctions may include:

- A PiCCA Member being suspended for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Board
- The Board imposing restrictions on a PiCCA Member about their contact with children
- A PiCCA Member being disbarred from PiCCA Membership

- Reporting potential criminal offences to the Australian Federal Police, state police and/or other regulatory bodies (in Australia and/or in-country as appropriate)
- Reporting to funders or partners if required under funding or partnership agreements.

Working with partners to protect children

5.13. PiCCA commits to working with partner organisations to ensure that children are protected from harm, abuse and exploitation in all its programs. It will ensure partner organisations:

- Are aware of the central importance of child protection in any PiCCA supported projects
- Have appropriate policies and safeguards in place to protect children
- Undertake police checks on staff and volunteers and where that is not feasible use appropriate alternate methods to screen staff and volunteers
- Undertake a child protection risk analysis and develop mitigation strategies to reduce risk
- Conduct awareness sessions/training on child protection for their staff and volunteers.

5.12 PiCCA will establish and implement plans to monitor that its partners are meeting minimum standards for protecting children.

5.13. PiCCA will identify, in collaboration with partner organisations, ways to enhance child protection in local communities through PiCCA supported projects.

5.14. PiCCA requires partner organisations to immediately report any instance of harm or potential harm of a child involved in implementing a PiCCA project. Following receipt of such a report the Board will convene at the earliest opportunity to discuss the matter and take necessary actions as soon as practicable. If the project is funded (fully or partially) by another organisation (eg. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) PiCCA will report the matter to that funder.

5.15. Where PiCCA is not satisfied with its partner's response to an instance of child harm, abuse or exploitation PiCCA will raise its concerns with the partner and seek to resolve the issue. Where it cannot be resolved PiCCA reserves the right to:

- Require the partner to take remedial action
- Terminate the Partnership Agreement
- Deem an organisation ineligible for future PiCCA support (funded or in-kind)
- Where appropriate, refer the matter to the police and other regulatory bodies in the country concerned
- Report the matter to funders or partners if required under funding or partnership agreements.