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## **TERRE DES FEMMES – Menschenrechte für die Frau e.V.**

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

adopted by the Board,  
Berlin, 12 October 2017

TERRE DES FEMMES (TDF) is a German non-profit women's rights organisation. We are committed to ensuring that girls and women can live a free, equal, and self-determined life while holding equal and inalienable rights regarding all aspects of life. Our aim is to raise public awareness by means of education and advocacy, campaigning and lobbying, international networking, and individual counselling. We collaborate with a number of independent partner projects and women's rights organisations abroad to support their efforts to help girls and women.

Our primary goal is to end gender-based discrimination, violence, and exploitation. This means that children's rights need to be protected during all our activities. TERRE DES FEMMES is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps are taken at all levels of our work to safeguard the wellbeing, health, and dignity of children participating in TERRE DES FEMMES activities.

This child protection policy outlines TERRE DES FEMMES's commitment to protecting children from harm. It sets out the responsibilities and procedures for all persons with contact with children in the context of activities of TERRE DES FEMMES. The policy adheres to internationally recognized standards set up by international children's rights instruments (especially the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child) and the Keeping Children Safe Coalition.<sup>1</sup> TERRE DES FEMMES communicates this policy to our volunteers and employees as well as all partners with whom we operate and jointly organize projects. This policy includes a code of conduct that is signed by TERRE DES FEMMES employees and the volunteers engaging in activities with children.

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<sup>1</sup> The Keeping Children Safe Coalition is a network of organisations working together to improve child protection through the development of safeguarding standards. See also [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk).

## Goals of this child protection policy

### TERRE DES FEMMES aims to

- **protect children** by minimising risks of harm to children throughout our work and projects. The safety of children is paramount. The child must be at the centre of everyone's care and concern.
- **protect children from gender-specific forms of violence** and help those with particular difficulties in getting help because of their ethnicity, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- **protect all TERRE DES FEMMES employees, volunteers, and its project partners** by setting clear guidelines about how to behave with children and what to do if there are concerns about the safety of a child.
- **protect the reputation and credibility of TERRE DES FEMMES** by clearly stating our commitment and practices to keeping children safe.

## Definitions

**Child** – TERRE DES FEMMES considers every human under the age of eighteen to be a child.

**Child abuse and neglect** – is defined by the [World Health Organisation](#) as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development, or dignity."

**Best interest of the child** – is a child rights principle, which derives from Article 3 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which says that "[i]n all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

**Child protection** – is the responsibility that organisations working or in contact with children. They have to make sure that their employees, volunteers, and partners (including external consultants and service providers) do no harm children in the context of projects and activities. They need policies and procedures in place to minimize the risk of harm to children. They report concerns about children's safety to the appropriate authorities.

**Child protection concern** – refers to the situation when an allegation is made, even if it is unlikely to be substantiated, that a child is being abused or is likely to be abused.

**Employee** – refers to anyone who works for or on behalf of TERRE DES FEMMES on a full-time or part-time basis. This includes interns and those working on short-term contracts.

**Volunteers** – means anyone working for TERRE DES FEMMES on volunteer basis.

**Partner organisations** – are those organisations involved in joint projects with TERRE DES FEMMES. Organisations that cooperate with TDF in projects involving direct contact with children have to either have or develop their own child protection policy or comply with our code of conduct.

## Preventative Measures

### Code of conduct

The aim of the code of conduct contained in the Annex is to ensure that TERRE DES FEMMES employees, volunteers, and partners take joint responsibility for the safety of children. An additional aim is to protect those persons from false allegation regarding their conduct towards children. All employees must sign this code of conduct, and all volunteers and partners that come into direct contact with children must sign the code of conduct as well. Awareness about this policy and the code of conduct should be spread to all TERRE DES FEMMES volunteers and partners.

### Safe recruiting

A human resources policy geared towards child protection aims to avoid that people will seek to be involved in TERRE DES FEMMES activities in bad faith in order to get access to children. The hiring and selection procedure addresses the extent to which the vacant position entails direct contact with children and where the corresponding risks for inappropriate conduct might lie. Employees hired for positions involving direct contact with children will need a certificate of good conduct ("erweitertes Führungszeugnis") from the police. All employees will sign the child protection code of conduct when starting their position. They will be informed of the TERRE DES FEMMES procedures in the case of allegations of misconduct and the role of the child protection officer and child protection commission.

### Data protection and communication standards

TERRE DES FEMMES has an elaborate [data protection policy](#). Personal data is not handed over to third parties. It is stored in password-protected databases with restricted access. The counselling centre uses a separate database whose access is restricted to the professional TDF-counsellors.

Some of our social media or public relations campaigns are directly targeted at children. This means that even in the areas where no direct contact with children occurs, child protection matters. Child protection is part of all phases of PR and awareness-raising campaigns.

### Joint projects

TERRE DES FEMMES is involved in joint projects with partner organisations in Germany and in other European countries. It is the responsibility of TERRE DES FEMMES to ensure that our partners either have their own child protection policy or adhere to this one. Child protection is a key concern in all phases of joint projects: development, implementation, and monitoring. The project managers communicate this child protection policy and code of conduct to partners to ensure that children's rights are protected.

### International cooperation

TERRE DES FEMMES is a member organisation of [VENRO](#), a German network of development and humanitarian aid NGOs. VENRO and TERRE DES FEMMES recognize that humanitarian aid should strengthen children's rights and prevent harm and abuse.

TERRE DES FEMMES supports several projects and women's rights organisations in other

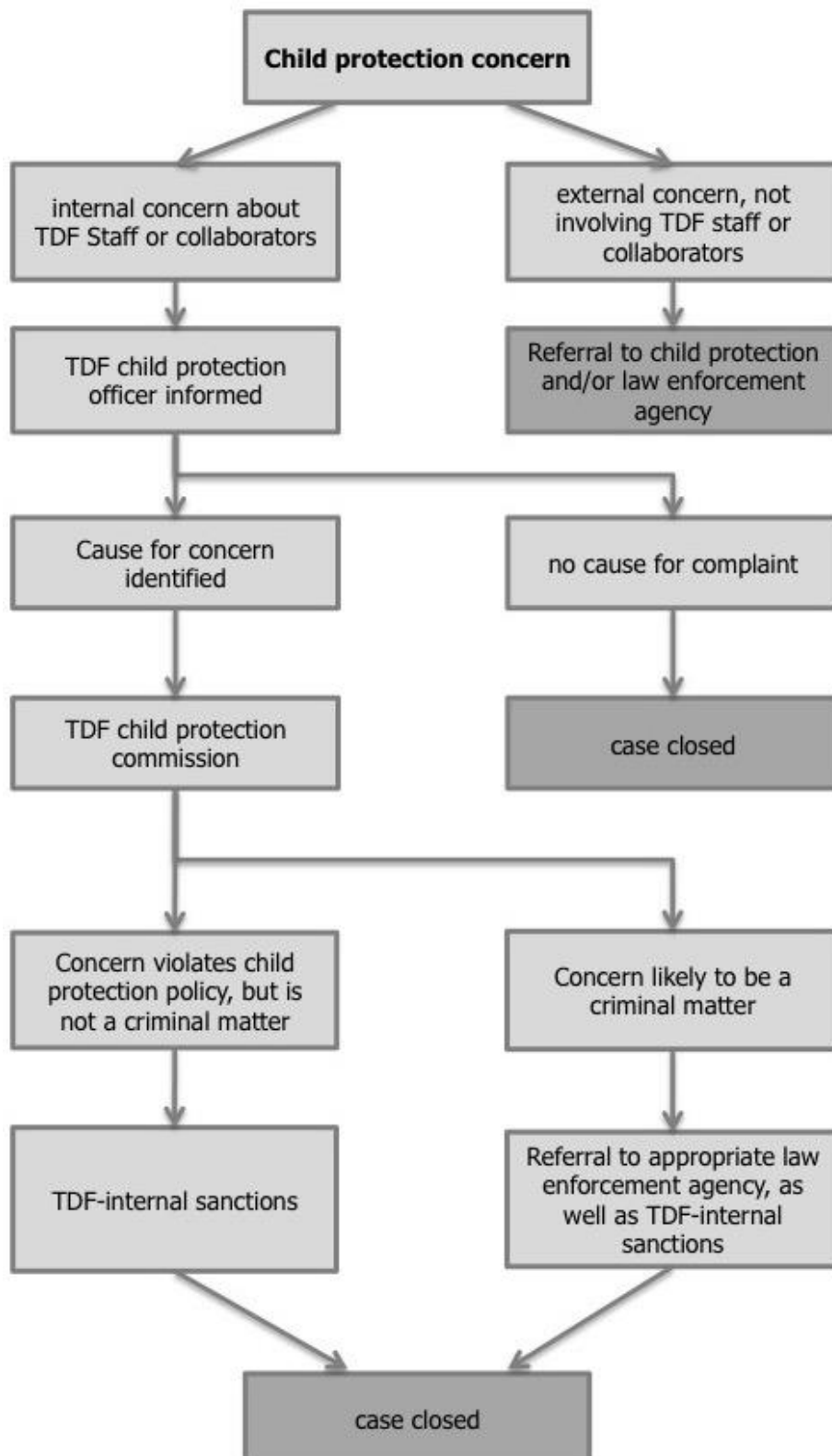
countries, some of which involve girls. Harm prevention and support provision is the core of these projects. TERRE DES FEMMES is committed to raising awareness for child protection in our international cooperation and encourages the inclusion of child protection measures in these projects. The directors of the women's rights organisations sign the code of conduct as a step towards the development of their own child protection policies.

## **Accountability**

Every TERRE DES FEMMES employee, volunteer, partner, or collaborator is responsible for protecting children. The director and heads of department are responsible for monitoring the adherence to this child protection policy. The TERRE DES FEMMES Board holds management accountable. This policy will be reviewed regularly and adjusted based on practical experiences with the policy.

## Child protection concerns: case management

This is the procedure that occurs in the case of an allegation of child abuse or another child protection concern. The child protection officer at TERRE DES FEMMES can be reached at [kinderschutz@frauenrechte.de](mailto:kinderschutz@frauenrechte.de). The TERRE DES FEMMES child protection commission consists of the TDF child protection officer, the Director of TERRE DES FEMMES, and the head of the department in question.



## Annex: Code of Conduct

TERRE DES FEMMES is committed to ensuring that children are protected from abuse within the organisation, at our events, and in connection with our work. Accordingly, TERRE DES FEMMES has instituted preventative measures within the organisation and projects to minimise the risk of abuse and violence against children. The aim of this code of conduct is to guide employees, volunteers, and partners in their interaction with children in order to take responsibility for the safety of children.

Name:

Position:

(employee, volunteer, project partner)

**By signing this document I agree to comply with TERRE DES FEMMES' child protection policy and to respond immediately to any concerns, allegations, and incidents, and notify the TERRE DES FEMMES child protection officer without delay at [kinderschutz@frauenrechte.de](mailto:kinderschutz@frauenrechte.de).**

### I will

- contribute to creating a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment for children.
- take children's beliefs and concerns seriously and foster their personal development.
- treat all children with respect.
- adhere to the two-person rule and avoid being alone with a child except in emergencies (exception: TDF counsellors).
- respect children's human dignity and their need to be protected at all times when taking photographs, filming, or writing reports for public relations work; in particular, this also applies to handling their personal data with care.

### This means that I will never

- abuse my position and negatively influence the life and well-being of a child.
- strike a child or assault them physically in any way; disciplinary measures will never entail physical or verbal violence or humiliation.
- abuse or exploit a child sexually, physically, or emotionally; in particular I will never engage in sexual activities with a child or expose it to any pornographic material.
- hug, pat, kiss or touch a child in any manner that is inappropriate or culturally insensitive.
- use any language that is inappropriate, indecent, discriminatory, or abusive.
- provide a child with unsolicited help to perform intimate acts that the child can manage alone (such as accompanying the child to the toilet or changing the child's clothing).

- develop a relationship with children that could be regarded as exploitative, abusive, or sexual.
- spend a disproportionately large amount of time with a child away from other children.
- tolerate or facilitate illegal, dangerous or abusive conduct toward children.
- engage in an intimate and/or sexual relationships with a child or engage in any conduct or communication of a sexual nature with a child. The age of the child involved is irrelevant. It is also irrelevant whether the relationship is heterosexual, homosexual, consensual, non-consensual, or condoned by parents or caregivers.

Should I have concerns about possible breaches of this code of conduct, I will immediately contact the TERRE DES FEMMES child protection officer. Notification of any possible contraventions is essential to safeguarding children.

I am aware that breaches of this child protection policy and code of conduct will be dealt with in accordance to relevant German laws.

Date:

Place:

Signature:

(Please send a signed copy to TERRE DES FEMMES)