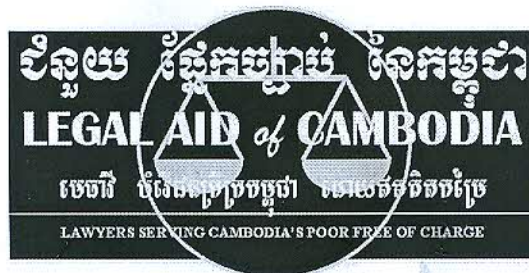


LEGAL AID OF CAMBODIA

Child Protection Policy



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1. Introduction

The term 'child' in this policy refers to a person under the age of 18 years, defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). All children have a right to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation. In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Legal Aid of Cambodia (LAC) works to ensure that all children, particularly those that are most marginalized and vulnerable, are empowered to realize their rights. All children have a right to protection:

“...from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child.” UNCRC – Article 19

LAC works to create a safe environment for children and aims to safeguard children from exploitation and abuse in all that we do, in line with Article 19 of the UNCRC. LAC believes that it is the responsibility of all personnel including staff, volunteers, consultants, partners, visitors and other associates to be aware of the risks to children. Staff should take steps to mitigate these risks and address issues that may arise by bringing any child-related concerns to the appropriate resolution, acting in accordance with the actions set out in this policy.

2. Purpose

This policy provides a framework for protecting children from exploitation and abuse in the delivery of LAC's services. This policy is approved by the Management Team and the Supervisory Board of LAC, and makes clear LAC's position on child protection, that children need protecting and safeguarding for many reasons. They may need protection from the effects of poverty, disadvantage, exclusion, violence and discrimination. In addition to these economic, social and political problems, individual children may also be at risk from specific forms of abuse by adults and other children.

In this policy LAC is concerned with mistreatment against:

- A child who is in contact with an LAC representative through an LAC program and during project implementation. Most beneficiaries of LAC are marginalized children who are particularly vulnerable to abuse. These vulnerable children may include disabled children, those from minority ethnic groups, street children, refugee and asylum seeking children, those whose families are affected by alcohol or drug problems, mental health issues, domestic violence or HIV/AIDS and other health issues.. “Vulnerable children” also includes children in contact with the law, encompassing offenders, witnesses and victims. Organizations such as LAC who work with children provide a means for establishing relationships with vulnerable children, and must therefore be vigilant of the possibility that a small minority of individuals may abuse their position to gain access to children.
- A child who is the child of an LAC representative and/ or shares the household of a LAC representative.

LAC is committed to complying with the law on child rights and welfare. This includes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the Royal Cambodian government in 1992. LAC takes seriously the responsibility to follow the Child Safe Organisation standard (CSO standard) in order to protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form.

3. The Policy

3.1 Goal and Objective

The goal of this policy is:

To protect children from exploitation and abuse of any kind during the delivery of LAC's services and research activities.

Objective:

To create and maintain protective environments for children in the delivery of LAC's program.

3.2 Scope and Communication

This policy applies to:

- All LAC personnel including staff, volunteers, interns, partner organisations, visitors and other associates

It is essential that all personnel are aware of the details of this policy and understand all obligations and duties imposed herein. This will be ensured by all long term LAC personnel being required to sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct. Short-term visitors to LAC's project sites including donors must sign the Visitors Statement of Commitment.

3.3 Guiding Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:

Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse

LAC does not tolerate child exploitation or abuse of any kind. Such action attracts disciplinary sanctions. LAC works to reduce the risks of child exploitation and abuse, and trains staff to fulfill all obligations in regards to the delivery of services. LAC will not knowingly engage anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children. LAC will not assist any individual or organisation that does not meet LAC's child protection standards in all operations and activities.

Recognition of the best interest of the child

Cambodia is a signatory to the UNCRC, and LAC is committed to upholding the rights and obligations under this convention. Each action taken by LAC in the implementation of this policy will be done so best interests of the child. All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential, and inequality and discrimination in all forms should be challenged.

Sharing responsibility for child protection

To effectively manage risks to children, LAC requires the commitment, support and cooperation of all relevant LAC personnel. They must all meet the terms of this policy.

Risk management approach

While it is not possible to eliminate all risks of child exploitation and abuse, careful management can reduce the risks to children that may be associated with LAC's activities. A risk assessment of a potential project should be completed before that project may be implemented. These risks should be managed for the duration of the service provided. Liaising with children involved in a specific project and assessing their circumstances may initially identify risks.

