



PEOPLE IN FOCUS


2025

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



PEOPLE *in*
FOCUS

 People in Focus Albania

 peopleinfocus.org

Tirana, Albania

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

“People in Focus”

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1. Introduction

Child protection is a universal concern, affecting children and young people in every society and country.

Abuse can take many forms—physical, sexual, emotional, or through neglect—and can happen in any environment where a child or young people is present.

At *People in Focus (PIF)*, we are committed to preventing abuse, reporting concerns, and supporting affected children. To guide our work, we have developed a comprehensive Child Protection Policy.

PIF organization was established in 2014 by a group of active people as a social humanitarian, non-political, non-religious, non-profits organization. It aims to support and represent developing communities in human rights issues, gender equality and social progress, aiming to play an important role to the community. The organization is deeply engaged in the long and continuous process in improving problematic issues and empower citizens according to well-defined standards. Our work focuses on assessing and monitoring the social conditions of different vulnerable groups following by analysis and studies to give an overview of the situation. We have extensive experience in collaborating with public institutions to improve the quality of public services.

With a strong foundation in non-formal education), PIF is a dynamic organization specializing in social and intercultural engagement. We offer capacity-building activities through trainings, workshops, youth exchanges, and awareness campaigns, addressing a wide range of community needs.

PIF also manages EU-funded programs, including Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Interreg, and Creative Europe, and collaborates effectively with local authorities and communities to implement impactful projects.

PIF considers it essential to create a safe space for children and young people, where they can freely share their thoughts and openly engage with others.

We are committed to protecting their rights, supporting their development, and ensuring their safety.

2. Aim and Principles of the Policy

This policy is designed to make sure that all children involved in PIF activities are kept safe and protected, no matter who they are or where they come from.

It applies to everyone—regardless of age, ability, race, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation—and aims to prevent any form of harm, abuse, neglect, or mistreatment.

This policy outlines how to prevent any risks through open communication, education and reporting when something seems wrong. Our aim is to create a safe and supportive environment for every child we reach and work with.



While creating this policy, PIF has based it on the key ideas and values found in major international agreements about children's rights and human rights and Albanian Constitution.

Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

This Child Protection Policy deals with the protection of children and young people as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UNCRC should be taken holistically, providing a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision and participation of all children. All children and young people involved in PIF activities and projects have the right to have their well-being and their best interests considered as top priority.

Albanian Law No. 18/2017, "On the Rights and Protection of the Child."¹

This law, adopted in 2017, establishes a comprehensive framework to safeguard children's rights and well-being across the country. The law mandates the establishment of dedicated bodies such as the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child and the National Council for the Rights and Protection of the Child to oversee and coordinate child protection efforts.

OUR COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- We will work to make life better for all children by supporting and protecting their rights, as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Zero-tolerance for Child abuse
- We commit to protect children with/ for whom we work
- Listen carefully to children thoughts and act by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- Dignity: The child's dignity must be preserved at all times. Languages must not degrade, victimize or shame the child. In images, children should always be dressed appropriately and should never be depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
- Accuracy: The portrayal of children must not be manipulated or sensationalized in any way. Images and stories should provide a balanced depiction of the child's life and circumstances, balancing negatives with empowering images or showing the progress that children are making. Communications should avoid making generalizations, which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation and pictures should not be taken and used out of context.
- Privacy: Any information that could be used to identify a child or put them at risk will not be used.

The policy also helps guide our staff, youth workers, experts, volunteers and external collaborators we work with. It explains the key rules and responsibilities we follow to protect children.

¹ https://www.drejtësia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/04_Ligj_18_2017_23.02.2017_Per_te_drejtat_dhe_mbrojtjen_e_femijes.pdf

3. Definition and Terms

Child: As defined in Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and on Article 3 of Albanian Law No. 18/2017, "On the Rights and Protection of the Child", a "child" refers to every human being below the age of 18 years

Child Protection: Child protection refers to the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. It encompasses measures taken to ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of children, and includes both preventive and reactive actions.

Child Abuse: Child abuse refers to any act, conduct, or omission that causes harm to a child's physical, emotional, or psychological well-being. It can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse refers to any deliberate act of physical harm or injury inflicted upon a child or vulnerable individual. It involves the use of physical force that may result in pain, injury, impairment, or distress. Physical abuse can manifest in various forms, including hitting, punching, kicking, burning, shaking, or any other action that causes physical harm.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves any form of sexual activity or behavior imposed on a child or vulnerable individual without their consent or understanding. It includes a wide range of actions, such as sexual assault, molestation, rape, incest, exposure to explicit material, or any other sexually exploitative conduct. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse refers to a pattern of behavior that aims to undermine, manipulate, control, or belittle a child or vulnerable individual's emotional well-being and sense of self-worth. It involves the use of verbal or non-verbal methods to inflict emotional distress, such as constant criticism, humiliation, insults, threats, intimidation, or isolation.

Child Neglect: Child neglect refers to the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, education, and medical care. It involves a pattern of inattention or disregard for the child's wellbeing, which can result in physical, emotional, or developmental harm.

Child Exploitation: Child exploitation involves the use, abuse, or exploitation of a child for personal or commercial purposes. It includes child labor, child trafficking, child sexual exploitation, child marriage, and any other forms of harmful or exploitative practices.

Bullying: A repeated and intentional aggressive behavior, involving an imbalance of power, where an individual or a group of individuals target another person or persons with the intent to cause harm, distress, or fear. It includes various forms, such as physical, verbal, relational, or



cyberbullying.

4. Code of Conduct

PIF is committed to doing everything possible to prevent and respond to situations where children might be at risk. We will always take reports of abuse seriously and our actions will follow our Child Protection Policy. We will report all concerns to the appropriate child protection services or police authorities.

This Code of Conduct includes guidance on ethical and proper standards of behavior of adults towards children, and also of children towards other children. It has been developed with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration and should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense.

We want all children and adults involved in People in Focus activities to feel safe, respected, and happy.

DO:

- Be aware what constitutes child abuse and exploitation (included in the Child Protection Policy) and understand its provisions.
- Recognize signs of abuse and reporting any suspicious observations immediately to the Child Protection officer.
- Treat all children equally: be inclusive and involve all children without discrimination.
- Stay alert of high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children and possibilities of discrimination against minors) and the potential for peer abuse.
- Be mindful about the way in which your language, actions, and relationships with children could be perceived.
- Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse.
- Provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual development.
- Encourage and respect children's voices and views.
- Limit access to and/or not expose children to any inappropriate electronic material.
- At all times respect the confidentiality of children's personal information.
- Obtain written consent from the child and parent/carer when photographing, filming or requesting personal information for activities
- Ensure that there is a minimum of two staff members present in meetings with children (to allow one to go out to deal with any immediate needs of children).
- When participants are invited to stay overnight, room sharing arrangements are agreed in advance and with consent of the parents/guardians and children

DON'T:

- ❖ Do not discriminate, shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children. This includes anything that may be considered emotional abuse (e.g. use language that will mentally or emotionally abuse a child or tell a story/show pictures that will mentally or emotionally abuse a child).
- ❖ Do not hit or otherwise physically assault participants.
- ❖ Do not act in any way that may be abusive or place others at risk of abuse.
- ❖ Do not condone violations of this code by others – staff, volunteers, experts, etc.
- ❖ Do not suggest inappropriate behaviour or relations of any kind or encourage any crushes by a child.
- ❖ Do not take photos, film or request personal information if not required for PIF's activities.
- ❖ Do not use inappropriately contact details (including social media accounts) from children outside of approved PIF activities.
- ❖ Do not be alone with a child in a private or isolated setting. Always ensure another adult is present or that the interaction is visible and appropriate.
- ❖ Do not give gifts or special treatment to one child over others. This can create favoritism or uncomfortable situations.
- ❖ Do not use drugs, alcohol, or be under the influence during any activity involving children or young people.

5. Staff Members

This Child Protection Policy applies to everyone who works or represents People in Focus—including board members, staff, interns, volunteers, experts, partners and other third parties. Everyone is informed about what abuse and neglect are, how to prevent them, and how to behave appropriately when working with children and young people.

All staff members will accept and commit to the Child Protection Policy;

- a. Staff, volunteers, interns and consultants/experts are recruited with clear job or role descriptions to meet the requirements of child protection policy.
- b. All recruitment interviews should include a discussion on child safeguarding and protection, the candidate's understanding of this and PIF's commitment
- c. Submit a criminal record certificate stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions.

The Policy will also be shared with the following groups:

- Children and their parents or carers, so they understand their rights and feel empowered to protect themselves and others.
- Partner organizations, who are expected to respect and follow the Policy, and to actively support its implementation.



- Other stakeholders, to promote a wider commitment to children's rights and protection.

Everyone involved in PIF and its activities must be fully aware of this Policy and what addresses. The Child protection Policy is published online to read and download from our official website: www.peopleinfofocus.org.

6. Child Protection Officer

PIF is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children, which is why a dedicated Child Protection Officer has been appointed to oversee the implementation and enforcement of child protection policies and procedures. The Child Protection Officer of People in Focus is Mrs. Armelia Barci – Executive Director.

The Child Protection Officer at People in Focus has the following key responsibilities:

- Leading the creation, application, and regular review of child protection policies and procedures to ensure they stay up to date and effective.
- Organizing training and workshops to increase knowledge of staff members about child protection principles and how to apply them in their work.
- Setting up and overseeing a confidential system for reporting child protection concerns or incidents, and making sure all cases are properly recorded, handled, and followed up.
- Offering advice and practical help to staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders who are dealing with child protection matters or need help following the policy.
- Keeping clear and secure records of all child protection-related cases, following rules about privacy and data protection.

The Child Protection Officer makes sure that the board members, staff, interns, volunteers, experts, partners and other third parties are aware of the principles, rules and procedures of this policy.

7. Risk Assessment and Mitigation

PIF is committed to design and deliver activities that are safe for children. Risk assessments are therefore conducted accordingly to the activities of each project.

We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimize the risks to children. Moreover, we will mitigate the risks, as below:

- Stay alert for possible risks in the activities or interactions where children are involved.
- Ensure safe environment on in field and online activities
- Taking action to reduce or remove risks, such as following safety rules and using proper procedures.
- Asking for help when unsure—ask for specialized institution help when there are no clear guidelines for a situation.

8. Reporting

All staff members and everyone working with PIF have the opportunity to report any concerns about a child's safety or welfare by using designated reporting forms (refer to the Annex). The confidentiality and privacy of anyone who reports a concern is protected and guaranteed. Every report is handled upon the procedure by the Child Protection Officer.

9. Accountability

PIF will regularly monitor the implementation of its Child Protection Policy and related procedures. Progress, performance, and lessons learned will be reported annually by the Child Protection Officer to the Board Members through a formal report.

Monitoring and evaluation will focus on assessing whether the standards outlined in the Child Protection Policy are being applied effectively and whether protective safeguards are functioning as intended.

This process will include conducting surveys among PIF staff, interns, youth workers, and experts to evaluate how well the standards are being met, their overall effectiveness, and areas that require improvement.

10. Confidentiality

PIF ensures recording, storing and using information concerning child protection and reporting professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance. Information will only be shared with people concerned, both internally and externally to the organization.

11. Referral Contacts outside the organisation

Police

☎ Emergency Number: 129

National Children's Helpline

☎ 116 111

National Social Service

☎ Tel: +355 44 541 842

✉ Email: info@sherbimisocial.gov.al

Tirana Regional Directorate of the National Social Service

☎ Tel: +355 4 452 7348

12. Contacts

For any inquiries, assistance, further information, or support regarding child protection matters, please refer to the appropriate contact below, depending on the situation:

People in Focus – Child Protection Officer

Mrs. Armelia Barci

✉ Email: armelia.barci@peopleinfocus.org / peopleinfocusalbania@gmail.com

Armelia
Barci

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Armelia Barci
Executive Director
People in Focus

Annex
Reporting Child Abuse Form

1. About You

Full Name:

Job Title:

Organisation:

Nature of Contact with the Child:

Contact Information:

☎ Phone:

✉ Email:

2. About the Child

Full Name:

Gender:

Age:

Address:

Parent(s)/Carer(s):

Has any treatment been provided to the child?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify which hospital and how the child was taken there:

3. Details of the Incident/Concern

How did the concern arise? ☐ Observed directly ☐ Suspected ☐ Disclosed by someone else

If disclosed, by whom and what is their relationship to the child?

Description of the incident (what happened, cause if known):

((Please clearly distinguish between observed facts, opinions, and hearsay. Include emotional state, visible injuries, etc. if applicable))

Date of the alleged incident:

Time:

Location:

Name of alleged perpetrator (if known):

Were there any other individuals involved?

Are other children at risk of harm?

Actions taken by you (if any):

Signature:

Date: