



## Children – Our Future depends on their Protection

Every human being has rights – and it goes without saying that they are similarly valid for children. However, children need special protection. They are still developing, physically and mentally, which should be fostered in various ways. They depend on their parents and other adults who take care for them at home and at school, during their education and within the health system. Children are the future and the assets of every country. In most of the countries in the Global South, they constitute the largest share of the population. If they are fortunate to grow up in good living conditions, the risk of conflicts declines while chances for a sustainable global development increase.

It is therefore encouraging that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989 is the most commonly signed UN convention worldwide. Nevertheless, child rights – children below the age of 18 – regarding protection, support and inclusion are being violated again and again. Hence, ten thousands of children die worldwide on a daily basis, most of them caused by avoidable reasons like malnutrition or curable diseases. Many children experience physical, mental or sexual violence which can also cause death. They are forced into marriages or to working under hardest and harmful conditions without any appropriate health or social insurance. Numerous girls must endure genital mutilation. Additionally, they are disadvantaged in various ways from their birth onwards and neglected in many countries.

Millions of children obtain no or insufficient school education. Around nine percent of the children within the primary school age worldwide are not going to school – despite the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) as well as the goals of the agenda 2030 for sustainable development decided upon in 2015 (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) focussing also on education.

Last but not least, many children live in conflict areas or have to leave them involuntarily. As refugees, they are more exposed to health and social restrictions as well as discrimination. Half of all refugees are now children.

## Sustainable Development Goals and Children Rights

Based on the UN Convention on the Child Rights, there is still much to be done. Therefore, the Indo-German Cooperation and its Partner Organisations promote Child Rights and protection in various way and completely according to the Sustainable Development Goals also benefitting children. Examples include SDG 1 “No Poverty“, SDG 2 “No Hunger“, SDG 3 “Health and Wellbeing“, SDG 4 “Quality Education“ and SDG 5 “Gender Equality“. The Indo-German Cooperation supports projects of its Indian anchor partner Ecumenical Sangam such as kindergardens and vocational education projects, contributing to the possibility for women and men to

earn adequate salaries. This increases the chance for children being well taken care of and educated. Additionally, together with the Ecumenical Sangam the Indo-German Cooperation supports health through awareness campaigns of diseases like leprosy and tuberculosis which are still widespread in India.

### **Voluntary Service with Children**

Volunteers from Germany and India are sent or received by the Indo-German Cooperation, volunteering abroad or in Germany in the framework of the *weltwärts* programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) are involved with children often during their services. In kindergardens, schools and sport projects they can enable the kids to have an ideal development and positive life perspectives. Working with children requires a special sensitivity in dealing, for which the volunteers will be thoroughly prepared by the Indo-German Cooperation. Additionally, all volunteers commit themselves to comply with the Child Protection Rules of the Indo-German Cooperation. They include among others respectful contact with children completely excluding every form of violence.

# Child Protection Undertaking of the Indo-German Cooperation (DIZ e. V.)

**For trustworthy relations of volunteers within the weltwärts programme handling children and persons in need of protection**

## Agreements

### **I WANT**

- to actively contribute towards a safe, positive and encouraging environment which respects children as individuals and to listen to them.
- to never abuse my power and influence which I hold because of my position and strength over the life and the well-being of a child and every other person in need of protection.
- to never get involved in a relation with children or persons in need of support or protection based on sexual, physical and emotional abuse or exploitation.
- to never demand or make use of services or favours of children or persons in need of protection which could be understood as abuse or exploitation.
- to refrain from any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation and preferential treatment.
- to comply with the Child Protection Rules in case I am entrusted with a child or another person in need of protection within my weltwärts service or within my sphere of influence.

### **I WILL**

- follow the Child Protection Rules of the Indo-German Cooperation.
- act according to my position. Towards children and persons in need of protection I consider myself as a positive role model.
- treat all children and persons in need with respect and take into consideration their reactions with regard to my approach and my behaviour.
- in coordination with concerned people or relatives make use of the “Two Adults Rule” e.g. “Open Door Rule”:
  - “Two Adults Rule”: if possible, I will try to secure the presence of another adult person or make sure, he or she is least in hearing distance during a face-to-face consultation, introduction, instruction, medical or rehabilitation measures for/on children or persons in need of protection.
  - “Open Door Rule”: in case the presence of another adult person is not possible or individual counselling or treatment seems necessary, I will leave the door of the respective room open as far as data protection of the concerning person is not violated.
- not introduce foreign persons into the project. I will avoid visits of family members / friend etc. during my deployment period. Exceptions can be permitted with prior consultation of my host organisation.

### **I PROMISE**

- to encounter children and persons in need of protection appropriately to their cultural socio-environment and values and to not inappropriately hold, stroke, hug, caress or touch them.
- to participate in activities with intensive physical contact only if professional handling with children and persons in need of protection requires to do so.
- neither to talk in an inappropriate, indecent or offensive way with children and persons in need of protection, nor to use such gestures towards them or give advice / assistance of such a kind.
- to avoid sexually ambiguous comments or gestures towards children or persons in need of protection, also not for fun.
- to take pictures or to film children or persons in need of protection only with their permission and to never record them in an inappropriate, indecent situation violating their dignity and/or privacy. This applies in particular with regard to the publication of footage.
- Documentation in blogs and/or reports:
  - I will respect the anonymity of children and change their names.
  - I will never talk or write in an inappropriate or offensive way about children entrusted to me in public.
  - I will never violate the dignity of the child in my photo documentations (take pictures of genitals, inappropriate nudity).

## Annex to the Volunteer Agreement

---

- to not spend excessively time alone with a child or a person in need of protection (see also “Two Adults Rule” and “Open Door Rule”).
- to assist a child or a person in need of protection with tasks they manage to do by themselves (as for example going to the toilet, taking a bath, changing clothes).
- to never beat a child or a person in need of protection or to abuse or hurt them in any physically or psychologically way. All disciplining will be done without violence and will not humiliate my counterpart.
- neither to embarrass, humiliate, disparage nor to abuse emotionally children or persons in need of protection in any other way.
- to not discriminate, treat in a different way or prefer children and persons in need of protection and thereby excluding third persons.
- to not employ children as housekeepers<sup>1</sup> or in any way classified as “child labour”<sup>2</sup>.
- to not establish a relationship with children and persons in need of protection that could be (mis)understood as exploitation or abuse.
- to not silently tolerate or participate in illegal, neglecting, violent or abusive behaviour towards children and persons in need of protection.
- to not establish or approve a physical/sexual relationship neither with a child nor with a person in need of protection.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>1</sup> The definition of „housekeeper” does not include occasional babysitting or gardening, etc. on school days or during vacation.

<sup>2</sup> According to the UN convention on the rights of the child (Art. 32a) children have the „right (...) to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.”