



Since 1996

AMCHA GHAR

Creating a better tomorrow

CHILD PROTECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Preamble	3
2. Procedures and Guidelines	5
3. Awareness Raising	5
4. Program Planning	6
5. Personnel – Screening and Recruiting	6
6. Behavior Protocols and code of conduct	7
7. Allegation / Incident Management plan	8
8. Protection of sponsored children	10
9. Visit to Amcha Ghar Programs	11
10. Advocacy on child protection and child rights	12
11. Communication about children and Photographs	13
12. General confidentiality of child information	13
13. Partner Organizations – Agreements	14
14. Contractor and Vendor's agreement	14




CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

I. PREAMBLE

Amcha Ghar is engaged in working with the poor at the grass roots and promotes the well being of all children whose lives are directly impacted through its Projects. Care and concern for Children are the heart of Amcha Ghar's ministry and is outlined in the Vision statement as

Our vision is to improve our beneficiary's lives with Love, Care, Knowledge, and Education which will create a better tomorrow for themselves and be impactful and responsible citizens of the society.

As a reflection of our commitment to the vision and considering the fact that children are often vulnerable to abuse and exploitation Amcha Ghar places highest importance to protection and safety of children in all its dealings. Protection is a right of the child.

Amcha Ghar commits to comply with all Partnership standards for child protection designed to safeguard children from exploitation, neglect, sexual and physical abuse. Amcha Ghar continually examines the need to reduce the risk to children in all its Programmes. Therefore these Standards for child Protection are intended to keep children safe from possible abuse and exploitation by Staff, sponsors, and others with whom they are in contact. This policy also intends to increase the awareness on child protection in the community and in the family.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) shall be the guiding principle for implementing basic rights for all children below the age of 18 years. The Government of India acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the child in 1992, and has also ratified the two Optional Protocol in 2007–

- (1) Involvement of children in Armed conflict
- (2) Sale of children, child prostitution & child pornography

“...and committed to its full implementation for the wellbeing of children. There are other laws pertaining to children in India such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) 2000 and Amendment Act 2006 and The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act), 1986. By the amendment with effect from 10th October 2006, it has extended the ban on employment of children below the age of 14 years in the area of:



1. Domestic help and in *dhabas*
2. Restaurants, hotels and the hospitality sectors.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (amended Act of 44 of 1986) also provide guidelines for safety and security of children.

This Policy is in conformity with the above laws, Amcha Ghar Mission Statement, core values, Partnership policy, on Child Protection, Customer Relations Service standards and Human Resource Policy of Amcha Ghar.

The procedures and guidelines for implementing the Policy are outlined in the following 11 sections.

1. Awareness Raising
2. Program Planning
3. Personnel – Screening and Recruiting
4. Behavior Protocols and code of conduct
5. Allegation / Incident Management Plan
6. Protection of Sponsored children
7. Visit to Amcha Ghar Programs
8. Advocacy on child protection and child Rights
9. Communications about children and Photographs
10. General Confidentiality of child information
11. Partner Organizations – Agreements
12. Contractor and Vendor's agreement



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2. Procedures and Guidelines

CPP I. Awareness Raising

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP I.1. promote regular awareness on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including their right to protection, to Amcha Ghar Staff, Board & Society members. This includes members of the Amcha Ghar Board, the MED Impact Board and the Advisory Council for India Marketing.
- CPP I.2. promote awareness of rights of children among Interns, consultants, community leaders, community volunteers, in the communities in which it works, including children and the general public.
- CPP I.3. ensure Amcha Ghar National Child Protection committee consists of Manager, Child Development (Convener), Sponsorship Operations Director, Advocacy Director, Design & Child Development Director, Manager, Media & Communication, Executive Associate from ND's office, Manager, Legal Service, Advisor and Gender & Development twice a year for ongoing review of Policy and its compliance and also as and when cases are reported. National Director is the Advisor to this group.
- CPP I.4. ensure Project Staff are given specific child protection training and skill enhancement.
- CPP I.5. facilitate in establishing local Child Protection Units in the communities it works, consisting of community leaders, key officials from Government, Medical Professionals, Police officers of the local area, judiciary and Project Staff to help in implementing Child Protection Programmes, to ensure protection of all children in the community and also handle any case on child abuse. These CPUs are organized at Community level, Project level as per the guideline and then they connect with the district level CPU which is a Government body.
- CPP I.6. facilitate in establishing child help lines and network with UNICEF, Social Defense and similar child protection NGOs.




CPP 2. Programme Planning

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 2.1 incorporate into its project design activities that focus on Child protection in the framework of United Nations convention on the rights of the child (UN CRC).
- CPP 2.2. intentionally design the Programmes in projects to move from child welfare approach to Child Rights approach and engage children (age appropriate) in program Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation and also to raise their voices against decisions that affect their lives.
- CPP 2.3. plan programs to reduce risks facing vulnerable children and to address particularly the needs of children who are in situations of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- CPP 2.4. design programs addressing the causes of abuse such as threats/vulnerabilities/existing violations and promote responses that support family and community responsible for the well being of children and the prevention of child abuse, exploitation and neglect.
- CPP 2.5. plan for rehabilitation of children who have been abused and exploited, are developed in the best interests of the child by enhancing and maintaining safety security, and reducing the risk from further harm.

CPP 3. Personnel Screening and Recruiting

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 3.1. recruit staff, both permanent and contract, only after obtaining adequate background verification from references and Amcha Ghar's own sources for any history of child exploitation, neglect and abuse.



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- CPP 3.2. ascertain their aptitude, interest and sensitivity in working with children and their previous work with children. Prospective employees, Volunteers appointed by the Community Based Organizations, interns, consultants, the Board & Society members are informed of Amcha Ghar Child Protection Policies at the start of any recruiting process and they are also screened similarly. The Board members are waived of the background check by the partnership.
- CPP 3.3. enhance capacities of staff working with children in projects, to effectively deal with issues of child rights and advocacy, to promote rights of children and to provide protection from exploitation, neglect and abuse.
- CPP 3.4. ensure that all work and activities of staff, both permanent and contract, supports the protection of all in communities from any form of exploitation, neglect and abuse.
- CPP 3.5. ensure that personnel exercise behavior protocols consistent with the Mission Statement and Core Values in their relationship with children, in the context of their language, actions, dress, and behavior.

CPP 4. Behavior Protocols and code of conduct

Amcha Ghar...

- CPP 4.1. personnel including staff, volunteers, interns and consultants will establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanor. This includes listening to children and showing respect to them.
- CPP 4.2. staff, interns, consultants, volunteers and visitors including sponsors will respect the local cultural context and behave in appropriate with children in communities as per the behavior protocols.
- CPP 4.3. personnel including staff, volunteer, interns and consultants will not allow project children to visit their homes under any pretext without the prior knowledge and agreement of their superiors.
- CPP 4.4. Project children are not permitted to stay overnight in the home of Amcha Ghar personnel at any time.
- CPP 4.5. Staff will not employ children as domestic workers in their homes.



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TRUST

CPP 4.6. personnel including staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and visitors will not spend time alone with a child or children. There will always be another adult (“two adult rule” principle) who will be able to see the interaction. The exception to this may be in the event where personnel are employed as professionally recognized trained counselors.

CPP 4.6. personnel including staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and visitors are always responsible for the interaction between an adult and a child even when it appears that a child is acting in a provocative manner.

CPP 4.7. personnel including staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and Visitors will not touch private parts of the body, or the touch, which will make the child uncomfortable.

CPP 5. Allegation/Incident Management Plan

Amcha Ghar

CPP 5.1. Any incident of child abuse in Amcha Ghar programmes directly implemented or implemented in partnership with other stakeholders in the target community shall be reported and managed in the following manner:

5.1 Community level: Incidents such as child sexual abuse, missing child, child’s death (unnatural death) and severe physical abuse of a child, to the extent of grievous injury in the child’s body that may take place in the target area involving any of the community members including volunteers, shall be reported to the Community Development Coordinator (CDC) who is the facilitator of the Child Protection Unit at the Community level and also to the Programme Manager.

5.2 The CDC and representatives of CPU shall meet the parents or care-giver and the child immediately for obtaining a detailed report on the incident. They shall also be responsible to render support for child’s medical treatment in the government hospital and to ensure that the case of the child is registered in the records of the hospital. The CPU members shall provide moral support to parents and the victim (child) to file the First Information Report (FIR) at the local police station.

5.3 If any threat is faced by the parents while filing the FIR then the child and/ or the parents can inform the Child Line (1098) or the Child Welfare Committee.

5.4 ADP Level: The CDC has the responsibility of informing the abuse case immediately to the concerned Programme Manager and the latter to report to the Point Person

in the National Office within 7 hours of the incident and the issue will be dealt sensitively by protecting the confidentiality and image of the child.

- 5.5 If the perpetrator (abuser) is a staff of Amcha Ghar, then it should be reported to the Child Protection Point Person and the Group Director Corporate Solutions at the National Office by the Programme Manager.
- 5.6 If the perpetrator (abuser) is the Programme Manager of the ADP/Project, then it should be reported by the staff who has knowledge of the incident or the affected party to the Child Protection Point Person at the National Office through a phone call followed up by email documentation. The confidentiality of the reporting person shall be maintained.
- 5.7 Often a child may be physically injured by the abuse. However, the psychological damage inflicted is far more painful and, ultimately, far more damaging to the child. Abused children must juggle a number of conflicting emotions. The most common psychological reactions are fear, confusion, anger, shame, depression, and lowered self-esteem, any or all of which may cause serious problems later in life if not resolved. Due care need to be paid to these aspects while managing the allegation/incident involving a child.
- 5.8 National Level: The Child Protection Point Person shall call for a CPU meeting at the National Office for the purpose of providing appropriate support to the concerned ADP in responding to the victim (child) and the family. The point person will also be responsible to update the Child Protection Incident database for forwarding the information to the Regional/International Child Protection Team.
- 5.9 In the event of a staff being involved, the Child Protection Point Person shall inform the details to the Legal and HR Dept for appropriate action.
- 5.10 When such a report is received against a staff/manager, a due process enquiry shall be held to ascertain the facts in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Based on the findings of the enquiry, appropriate action will be taken to bring a closure to the matter.
- 5.11 Ensures investigation will be treated with care, concern and in absolute confidentiality.
- 5.12 The National Director should be kept fully updated on all Child Protection incidents irrespective of who is involved (community, volunteers, staff, programme managers etc.)

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CPP 6. Protection of sponsored children

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 6.1. follow childcare Policy and Child Sponsorship Standards outlined in the Sponsorship Customer Service Handbook in all Sponsorship programs.
- CPP 6.2. ensure Staff members directly relating to sponsors receive raising and training about the need for child protection, strategies to protect children and the detection of possible irregularities in requests related to sponsorship.
- CPP 6.3. ensure sponsored child's history, picture folders and of children are stored in locked and secure facilities with a limited number of people to have access.
- CPP 6.4. ensure all sponsor correspondence with a sponsored child is for inappropriate or suggestive comments, requests or obscenities. In the event of inappropriate correspondence being discovered, Amcha Ghar reserves the right to decline sponsorship or sever the sponsorship relationship.
- CPP 6.5. ensure Amcha Ghar sponsor and his or her sponsored child should not exchange home addresses.
- CPP 6.6. ensure Staff to be aware of Amcha Ghar's policy on the use of the World Wide Web. Sponsors are advised that information via the World Wide Web is provided as a service and is not to be downloaded or redistributed to another site. Any posting on the World Wide Web should have a clear warning that the information is not to be or redistributed for any reason unless is obtained in writing from the WV office concerned. Such activity could Subject the user to legal action by Amcha Ghar.
- CPP 6.7. decline any request for assistance in child adoption from Partnership or from any other source.

CPP 7. Visit to Amcha Ghar programs

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 7.1. encourage visits to projects that are informed in advance and with the consent of the family/community.
- CPP 7.2. permit a visit to a sponsored child or a children in project only when
- a) it is announced
 - b) the appropriate background checks as per local law are completed
 - c) the visitor has agreed in writing to abide by the behavior protocols and local code of conduct
 - d) the visitor is accompanied by a Amcha Ghar staff (Two adult rule principle) and child's Parent/guardian or a member of the community.
- CPP 7.3. permit the sponsor/visitor to meet the sponsored or child in project in a central location, usually the Amcha Ghar Office/Project office or community, accompanied by a project staff and child's parents/guardian or a member of the community, but the meeting will not be in the sponsor's hotel or a private place or child's home.
- CPP 7.4. Whenever permitted by local Law, criminal record screening of sponsors/visitors prior to visit will be carried out. If the screening leads to denial of the sponsor's request, the National/PMO Offices will be informed, so as to prevent the sponsor/donor attempting to visit directly.
- CPP 7.5. ensure that communities and families participating in sponsorship and other WVI Programmes will be advised of Amcha Ghar's regarding sponsor and other visits to the project. They will be encouraged to report immediately any visit that has not arranged through Amcha Ghar. The National Director or his/her designee will in such case take up the matter with the visitor and alert the appropriate Support Entities as per WVI agreed standards.
- CPP 7.6. in the event of actual or suspected cases of child abuse or inappropriate behavior by a visitor the Program Manager or in-charge should immediately report to the PMO Director/ National coordinator CIM, who will then follow WVI reporting procedures. Appropriate action will be initiated immediately with the visitor/sponsor, which may include criminal investigation and severance of relationship of the sponsor with Amcha Ghar.
- CPP7.7. support offers to provide for social service activities in the target area by interested parties/groups only when the visit is considered by WV India



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to be in the best interest of children. These groups will be asked to sign to agree by the behavior protocols and local code of conduct.

CPP 8. Advocacy on child protection and child rights

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 8.1. endeavour to influence relevant changes in public policy that will support Child Rights and provide protection to children through at different levels of administration and Non-Government Organizations.
- CPP 8.2. encourage promote and develop research activities that will support such advocacy efforts to seek structural and system changes for child protection and to promote children's participation in securing their rights.
- CPP 8.3. collaborate and network with agencies engaged in Child Rights and Child Protection for sharing knowledge and spearheading to secure the rights of children.
- CPP 8.4. actively network with Churches, Governments, Non-Government organizations and Human Rights Commissions in organizing and participating in campaigns, rallies, seminars on Child Rights, and also advocating / persuading with decision makers for necessary changes/amendments to child related legislations. Each Directly Run Project will make one staff responsible for this additional duty.
- CPP 8.5. provide support in the areas of legal aid/advocacy pertaining to instances of infringement of child rights/protection.
- CPP 8.6. share best practices and lessons learned concerning child rights and child protection and disseminate to WV partnership to enhance knowledge, Staff competency and ministry approaches.




CPP 9. Communications about Children and Photographs

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 9.1. ensure that all communication material on children in the form of pictures/captions are decent, dignified and respectful, and will not present children as victims, nor will exaggerate/glamorize poverty at the cost of the child. They will abide by WVI communications reporting standards with regards to vulnerable children.
- CPP 9.2. ensures Amcha Ghar web sites should not use scanned images of children without formal permission of the Amcha Ghar office for the project and the parents/guardians of the child. Written permission should be obtained.
- CPP 9.3. ensure child personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of child in the projects should not be used on Amcha Ghar websites or in any other form of communication about a child.
- CPP 9.4. ensure individuals or organizations requesting the use of Amcha Ghar resource such as videos or photographs should be required to sign an agreement with the appropriate personnel as to the proper use of such materials.

CPP 10. General Confidentiality of child information:

Amcha Ghar will...

- CPP 10.1. ensures Projects and PMO/National Offices to protect and safeguard records and documents of children and maintain their confidentiality.
- CPP 10.2. share Information about a child protection incident shared with people only if it is deemed necessary by Child Protection monitoring group.
- CPP 10.3. ensure names and identities are not to be disclosed outside or to the media.
- CPP 10.4. Child abuse incidents to be flagged as confidential and handled with care and concern.

The image shows a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susmita Singh". To the left of the signature is a circular official stamp. The stamp contains the text "AMCHA GHAR" at the top, "F-1102" in the center, and "TRUSTEE" at the bottom.

CPP 11 Partner Organizations - Agreements:

Amcha Ghar will...

CPP 11.1. ensure all written agreements with partner organizations include a clause referring to child protection and the expectation that the partner organization will have a child protection policy of its own or agree that its staff will abide by Amcha Ghar's child protection behavior protocols.

CPP 11.2. initiate action to any Non-compliance of Child Protection protocols that will lead to Amcha Ghar terminating the agreement.

CPP 12 Contractors & Vendor's agreement

CPP 12.1 WVI Contractors/Vendors make a self-declaration stating that children (below 18 years) will not be employed by them for any task. This is one of the clauses in the MOU in dealings with the Contractors/Vendors.

CPP 12.2 CBOs to adhere to the Child Protection standards to safeguard children from exploitation, neglect, sexual and physical abuse. Also ensures volunteers appointed by SHGs/Federation to comply with the child protection behavior standards and a self-declaration from Volunteers stating that they have not committed violence against children.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Susheel Singh", is written over a circular purple stamp. The stamp contains the text "AMCHA GHAR TRUST" around its perimeter.