Addis Guzo

Moving forward together

Center of Excellence for mobility aid provision, pediatric physiotherapy & early childhood intervention

Addis Guzo Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

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ABOUT ADDIS GUZO

„ADDIS GUZO - SWISS NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WORKING WITH AND FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN ETHIOPIA“ is a non-profit organization operating in Ethiopia, registered as a Non-Government Organization in accordance with the new Civil Society Proclamation No.1113/2019 with certificate number **2719** issued on May 23rd 2019. ADDIS GUZO Ethiopia is managed and supported by the ADDIS GUZO Association, founded in 2010 and based in Switzerland.

ADDIS GUZO's mission is to improve the lives of people living with disabilities in Ethiopia (including children and young people between the ages of 0 and 18 years). We provide a wide range of services such as mobility aids supply, maintenance and repair, professional assessments, physical therapy for adults and a skills development program (economic empowerment of women living with disabilities, life skills training, sport and art recreational activities). The services specifically related to children and young people include physical therapy and an early intervention program for children with multiple disabilities (physiotherapy, adaptive play, functional communication, occupational therapy and coaching for parents and caregivers).

INTRODUCTION

Every child is potentially at risk of abuse and exploitation, regardless of what part of the world they live in and regardless of their social status, gender or whether they are disabled or not. In order to prevent and respond to child abuse, it is critical that we as an organization reach a common understanding of what constitutes child abuse. It is therefore important to us that every person associated with ADDIS GUZO understands, acknowledges and practices the issue of child abuse and their own role and responsibility in protecting children and youth from abuse and all forms of neglect.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

ADDIS GUZO is committed to creating and maintaining a caring and protective environment consistent with its core values that prevents and combats child abuse and exploitation. We condemn all forms of child abuse and exploitation, whether within or outside our organization, and respond appropriately to any suspected, attempted or substantiated abuse within our sphere of influence. We seek to ensure that mechanisms are in place to **raise awareness, support prevention, encourage reporting and facilitate response**. These range from staff development activities such as training and counseling to actions such as suspension, dismissal and legal action.

It goes without saying that ADDIS GUZO does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of age, gender, nationality, religion, disability, place of residence, social status or family background. We explicitly promote equality and respect diversity and embrace our responsibility to support the most vulnerable in society (young children with disabilities who often lack communication tools). We actively anticipate the different circumstances of children and respond effectively to those who are most vulnerable. Therefore, we pay special attention to the needs of children with physical and mental disabilities and seek to protect all children and youth in our care to the best of our ability.

SCOPE

ADDIS GUZO believes that every child has the right to develop to his or her full potential, to quality education, dignified treatment and healthcare, participation and non-discrimination. **Everybody involved in the care of children and young people in ADDIS GUZO has the responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, exploitation, violence and discrimination.** In this policy, specific attention is focused on internal mechanisms to prevent and respond to child abuse within ADDIS GUZO's work and services. The ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** therefore applies to all personnel, caregivers, visitors, beneficiaries involved. It is the responsibility of all at ADDIS GUZO, from executive to staff and volunteers, to create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work, volunteer or access our programs and services. We expect all within our organization, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from any kind of harm by adopting the practices and behavior of the ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** and to report any abuse or neglect of which they become aware of immediately, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organization, or by those outside our organization including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

GOALS OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- preventing cases of child abuse
- informing children, co-workers, board members, family and community members, volunteers and partners (sponsors, donors, governmental authorities, etc.) about ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding)
- encouraging co-workers directly involved with children to apply the skills needed to contribute to each child's development and protection
- ensuring that all co-workers have the working conditions needed to contribute to each child's development and protection
- fostering open and honest discussions on child abuse in meetings and workshops amongst all stakeholders (children, young adults and their families, child and youth care co-workers, management staff, board members, rehab staff, mobility aid workshop staff, admin staff, maintenance and security staff, etc.)
- putting in place fair, secure and transparent reporting channels that guarantee the right of stakeholders (children, parents, staff) to be heard

OUR POLICY IS BASED ON

- The ADDIS GUZO vision, mission and values
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Country Response to the Questionnaire on Violence-Against-Children by The Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- Ethiopian Law

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

ADDIS GUZO defines child abuse as the intentional harm or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18, which includes the following:

- **Family violence**: family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It can also consist of witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family, or between people who take on the role of family in a child or youth's life. When children and youth are exposed to family violence, they are at increased risk for physical injury and harm, and this has a significant impact on their well-being and development.
- **Physical abuse**: physical child abuse occurs when a child is intentionally physically hurt or put at risk of harm by another person.
- **Sexual abuse**: child sexual abuse is any sexual act with a child, such as fondling, oral-genital contact, sexual intercourse, exploitation, or the consumption of child pornography.
- **Emotional Abuse**: Emotional child abuse is the violation of a child's self-esteem or emotional well-being. It includes verbal and emotional abuse - such as constantly belittling or calling a child names - as well as isolating, ignoring, or rejecting a child.
- **Discriminatory Abuse**: Discriminatory child abuse occurs when someone treats a child disrespectfully because of his or her age, disability, gender, race, or religion.
- **Neglect**: Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect, and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered in the context of the appropriate resources available.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Children depend on adults to care for and protect them at all times and in all circumstances.

The younger a child is or if he or she has to live with a mental disability and therefore cannot express himself or herself or can only express himself or herself in a very limited way, the greater the responsibility of the adults to watch over the child, to look closely (since child abuse is often very difficult to recognize) in order to protect him or her adequately.

At ADDIS GUZO, we believe that we owe it to the children in our responsibility to contribute to awareness and prevention with regard to child abuse and to take appropriate action when we perceive any form of child abuse or neglect. This is an integral part of our work and who we are, and affects everyone who comes into contact with our organization or chooses to work with us.

The Board of Directors is responsible for developing and adopting ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures***. It delegates the implementation to the Country Director and all department heads and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection.

The Country Director will, on the best advice available, determine the appropriate level and duration of the Child Protection Awareness Training. Such training must, as a minimum, cover the following topics: legal issues, ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** and procedures, children's rights, identifying abuse, abusers and victims, responding to disclosures, dynamics of abuse, its causes and correlations.

Our specific approach is outlined in this ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures***. The role of each entity in relation to the development and compliance of it is detailed in the table below.

Role/Responsibility of the Board of Directors
• Promote the commitment to this Policy and its expectations. • Support policy review on a three yearly cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations of the Ethiopian Government, or organizational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare.
Role/Responsibility of the Management at ADDIS GUZO
• Ensure all involved personnel understand their obligations in accordance with the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy* and any relevant policy and procedure. • Ensure that this includes induction, a minimum of one compulsory training session, and regular discussion, guidance, supervision and team meetings. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/work procedures and guidelines are in place to support child protection practice in accordance with the expectations of the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy* as well as the Ethiopian Law. • Ensure to support personnel in a joint way with a decision to initiate any form of action to protect a child from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any personnel involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy as much as possible. • Ensure to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and member welfare. • Ensure that our personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching or volunteering with children and families.
Role/Responsibility of all personnel
• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy. • To take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying, exploitation and harm.

OUR COMMITTMENT

ADDIS GUZO is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programs, services or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. Our ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** are accessible in forms that are easy to understand and are communicated to children, young people and their families, our personnel and the general public.

We ensure that each person involved in our delivery of services to children and young people understands their role and the behavior we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We have a code of conduct, which is approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our organization that outlines our expectations for behavior towards children and young people. Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the code of conduct and indicate, in writing, that they have read and are committed to it. Any action or behaviour which is reasonably deemed as child exploitation or abuse will, where applicable, be reported to the appropriate authority.

ADDIS GUZO will co-operate fully with any authority in applying criminal, civil or disciplinary actions against any person or organisation contravening this policy.

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct intends to build on the guiding principles of that policy by providing clear boundaries for the behaviour of all ADDIS GUZO representatives when interacting with children. This applies to ADDIS GUZO representatives, partners, employees and volunteers at all times and serves as a guide to make ethical decisions in their professional and private lives. This code of conduct relies first and foremost on individuals engaged by ADDIS GUZO to use judgement and common sense and to avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse. All ADDIS GUZO representatives must read, sign and abide by this Child Protection Code of Conduct. Failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary procedures, restriction of duties or termination of employment or other contractual agreements or relationships with ADDIS GUZO.

ADDIS GUZO representatives must sign that they understand this Code of Conduct and agree, among other things, to the following:

- To conduct themselves in a manner consistent with ADDIS GUZO's values and policies for the protection of children and youth.
- To treat all children with respect regardless of their race, color, gender, language, religion, views, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability or other status;
- Not use language or conduct toward children that is inappropriate, harassing, offensive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate;
- Not entice children to engage in sexual activities or acts of any kind, including payment for sexual services or acts;
- Not invite any unaccompanied child into my home or place of lodging unless there is an imminent risk of injury or harm;
- To obey relevant local, state and national laws governing work with children, including those related to child labor;
- Not to physically punish children;
- Refrain from disciplining children;
- To report any suspicion, allegation or witness of child abuse.

WHAT WE DO - KEY PARTS OF THIS POLICY

What is essential to safeguarding children and enforcing a *Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy* is the development of an open and responsive culture within our organization.
We as an organization and each individual staff member need the courage to break the silence and taboo of talking about child abuse.

Awareness and Prevention

- Everyone connected to ADDIS GUZO should understand child abuse in all its implications.
- We support ongoing education and training for our personnel to ensure safeguarding information is provided in an ongoing way.
- We provide information to children and their caregivers about our commitment to safeguarding children and their rights,
- Roles and responsibilities regarding child protection are clearly defined and communicated. All employment contracts and codes of conduct signed by co-workers and representatives of the organization also refer to the child protection policy.
- We monitor our personnel and external providers to ensure appropriate practice and behaviors, and policies are followed. We communicate with our personnel to ensure that they understand our policies and that the policies are effective in the work place.
- We require our personnel to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people and we review police record periodically.
- We also have appropriate measures in place to minimize the likelihood that we will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:
  Our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for positions face-to-face interviews are held which includes safeguarding-related questions screening checks are undertaken, including identity, criminal record, working with children.

Reporting and Responding

- Every employee is required to immediately report any information he or she has about a possible case of child abuse (see reporting procedure). Any adult who withholds information or covers up any type of abuse will be considered an accessory. Failure to report is serious misconduct.
- Confidentiality is paramount in handling abuse cases; information is handled sensitively. The child or any other person giving information about child abuse must be advised that information about the suspected abuse will be shared only with those authorized and officially assigned to investigate it.
- Children, staff, or other adults who make reports will be supported and protected. In all cases of suspected or substantiated child abuse or neglect, the focus is on safeguarding and protecting the child.
- At the same time, therapeutic measures for support and processing are offered to the persons concerned.
- Prompt and transparent action is taken, taking into account local legal responsibilities.
- A person accused of child abuse receives a fair hearing.
- Written records of all reported cases of abuse and their outcomes are kept in a secure location at the facility.

Reporting procedure

If abuse is suspected, the direct supervisor and the HR manager are informed first. If one of them is under suspicion himself, the next higher level is informed. Both employees listen to the incident and then report it to management. Management separately invites the suspect and the alleged victim or the victim's caregiver to a more detailed investigation of the case. If the suspicion is confirmed, local authorities are immediately involved, and suspension, dismissal and legal action follow.

Documentation, Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed at least every 3 years. Under certain circumstances, an early review may be required, e.g., changes in legislation, organizational changes, results of incidents, and other impacts. The changes are then made by management and the Board of Directors. ADDIS GUZO keeps records to document each review conducted. Records may include meeting minutes and documentation of changes to policies and procedures resulting from a review.

Berne, September 22nd, 2021

Marianne Locher President Addis Guzo Association Switzerland	Christine Oberli Cashier Member of the board Addis Guzo Association Switzerland	Bernhard Wissler Project Coordinator Member of the board Addis Guzo Association Switzerland

Code of Conduct
Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures
Confirmation

I, ……[insert name]. ……acknowledge and confirm that:

- I have read and understand the Code of Conduct for ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures***
- I agree with and will follow the principles set out in the ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** and I will always use common sense to ensure the safety and welfare of children and their families
- Furthermore, I hereby agree to treat all children with respect regardless of race, color, gender, language, or religion and not to use language or conduct toward children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate
- I will not use any form of corporal punishment of children
- I will not engage in sexual activities with children. Not hold, kiss, fondle, caress or touch children in an inappropriate manner
- I will not use computers, cell phones, video and digital cameras to exploit or molest children or to access child pornography through any medium
- I will not condone or participate in child-related activities that are illegal, unsafe, or abusive
- I will report any suspicion, allegation or witness of child abuse or other violations of the ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** and Code of Conduct in accordance with the reporting procedures outlined in the ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** document
- I will keep all information about child protection incidents in which I am involved confidential and to disclose or discuss information only with the persons responsible for investigating incidents or other parties designated by them and in accordance with the reporting procedures

I have read and agree to strictly abide by the ***Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures*** and Code of Conduct. I understand that it is my personal responsibility to comply with these requirements at all times.

Name: Signature: Date:

Witness: