



Procedural Guidelines for Implementing the Terre des Hommes Child Safeguarding Policy



**Empowered Children.
A Just World.**

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1. Purpose and Scope of these Procedural Guidelines

TDH is committed to child safeguarding. These procedural guidelines are designed to ensure the effective implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy by clearly outlining in practical terms **how and by whom** its standards are to be applied within TDH's work. This commitment ensures that children and adolescents participating in our programmes, and those in their immediate environments, experience the highest possible level of safety and protection. These procedural guidelines are mandatory for the TDH Executive Board, all staff at the Head Office and in the regional offices. The TDH Executive Board and regional coordinators are responsible for ensuring compliance with, and continuous improvement of the Safeguarding Standards and Procedures. They are supported by the Safeguarding Focal Points. The required resources for implementation are provided by the Executive Board and/or the Regional Coordinators.

2. Contact Person and Safeguarding Committee

The designated contacts for Child Safeguarding are the Global Focal Points for Safeguarding at the Head Office and the Regional Focal Points for Safeguarding in the programme regions. They ensure that:

- the names and contact details of all Safeguarding Focal Points are available to all Terre des Hommes staff and are published on the organisation's website and internal SharePoint,
- all member organisations of the Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF), cooperation partners, and partner organisations are provided with this information,
- the contact list is regularly updated and made accessible,
- they regularly participate in Child Safeguarding trainings and keep their knowledge up to date,
- cooperation is established either with an external professional advisor specialising in Child Safeguarding or a local child welfare organisation, which can be consulted, particularly in suspected cases of violence against children.

The Safeguarding Focal Points are supported by a Safeguarding Committee. At the head office, the Committee is appointed by the Executive Board; in the programme regions, it is

appointed by the respective Regional Coordinators. The Committee's structure and operations are governed by the [Internal Rules of Procedure](#)¹.

3. Team People & Culture and Regional Coordinators with HR responsibilities

The People & Culture Team and/or the Regional Coordinators ensure that all staff in Germany and the regions are informed about the formal documents, policies, and standards related to Child Safeguarding before and upon hiring, as well as throughout the duration of their employment or service contract, and that they have signed a corresponding declaration of commitment.

The People & Culture Team is involved in the development and implementation of new policies and agreements, ensuring that the respective legal and operational regulations are duly considered.

By signing their employment contract, and thus being bound to the »Compliance« works agreement, the staff members of Terre des Hommes Germany e.V.² are also required to uphold the Child Safeguarding Policy and its procedural guidelines. Regional Coordinators shall include a corresponding clause in their local contracts.

All staff in Germany are required to submit an extended police clearance certificate and to renew it every five years. The People & Culture Team sends out reminders and requests the certificates. Any entry on the certification that pertains to Safeguarding concerns will result to disqualification from employment at Terre des Hommes.

The following regulations shall be regarded as minimum standards in all recruitment processes involving new staff – including those at executive and management levels, interns, and contracted staff in regional offices. These apply to all employment and internship contracts entered into by Terre des Hommes Germany, including equivalent contracts in and by regional and country offices.

The **People & Culture Team** or the **responsible Regional Coordinators** ensure that the following steps are followed:

1. **Job advertisements:** All external job advertisements must reference the Child Safeguarding policy and the requirement to present a police clearance certificate upon hiring.

¹ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Knowledge-Base-Kindesschutz.aspx>

² Terre des Hommes e.V. means it is a registered association (in Germany)

2. **Application Documents:** Application documents are examined for patterns such as frequent, unexplained transitions in professional roles or other irregularities that may warrant further scrutiny. Certificates, employment periods, and stated employers are verified against the information provided in the resume/CV.
3. **References:** With the applicant's consent, references from managers or trainers may be requested at any time.
4. **Interview:** All interviews must include questions related to Child Safeguarding. A specific guide defines the scope of questions depending on the position. Questions may include:
 - If there are frequent, unexplained transitions in professional roles or jobs you shall ask for the reasons behind and whether they materialise into concerns about Child Safeguarding?
 - What is the candidate's interest in working with children and the job advertised?
 - What is the candidate's general attitude towards Terre des Hommes' Child Safeguarding standards?
 - Does the candidate have own ideas on how to protect children from violence during events organised by Terre des Hommes?
 - Does the candidate have any personal experience handling critical safeguarding cases and taking action to safeguard children?
5. **Contract Conclusion and Recruitment:**
 - All new staff – including Executive Board members, management, interns, and temporary personnel – must submit a police clearance certificate³, issued in no more than three months prior to submission, or an equivalent document in line with country-specific regulations, promptly upon signing the employment contract. Non-submission entitles the employer to rescind the employment contract. A corresponding clause in the employment contract shall ensure this.⁴
 - All new staff are informed about all relevant documents and policies (employment contract, Child Safeguarding policy, procedural guidelines, works agreements, the declaration of commitment to the Child Safeguarding policy) and are required to act accordingly.

³ In Germany, the »extended police clearance certificate« is submitted.

⁴ Clause in the German employment contract: An extended police clearance certificate must be submitted for review within 4 weeks after the start of employment. If the extended certificate reveals legally binding convictions for offenses involving sexual abuse and violence against children or other relevant entries, employment is excluded or the employment relationship will be terminated immediately during the probationary period. In this case, contrary to Section 3 of this agreement, Terre des Hommes may, for justified reasons, apply the legally permitted notice period of 2 weeks, accompanied by immediate and irrevocable release from duties.

-  By signing their employment contracts, all staff signify agreement and adherence to the Child Safeguarding policy.
-  An introduction to Terre des Hommes' Child safeguarding policy is an integral part of the individual onboarding process.
-  All new staff must participate in an internal training organised by the Safeguarding Focal Point at the earliest opportunity. Certificates from the mandatory online training must be submitted digitally to the People & Culture Team and completed within the first two months of employment.

Individuals under the age of 18 who are participating in school internships or similar programmes are exempted from the requirements above. However, they must receive an initial orientation on appropriate conduct and Child Safeguarding measures from their designated supervisor.

6. Trainings

The Safeguarding Focal Points ensure that internal Safeguarding and Child Protection trainings are conducted regularly for all staff at Terre des Hommes. The People & Culture Team supports the implementation of these trainings and involves the Works Council or other relevant bodies, where appropriate.

4. Programme Work

4.1 Cooperation with partner organisations

Partner organisations implementing projects are required to develop, implement, and regularly review their own Child Safeguarding policies that comply with TDH Safeguarding Standards and international standards.

For this reason, Terre des Hommes informs all partner organisations about its Child Safeguarding policy, offers guidance, and supports them in developing and implementing their own policies.

Key aspects considered by Terre des Hommes when cooperating with local partner organisations include:

- ✓ Prior to initiating any cooperation or project implementation, potential **risks** related to Child Safeguarding at the organisational and project levels are assessed. The project coordination team, supported by the Safeguarding Focal Points, uses tools

provided by TDH such as the Risk Assessment Matrix and the Institutional (self-) Assessment tool⁵.

- ✓ By signing the cooperation agreement, the **partner organisation commits to complying with the TDH Child Safeguarding policy**. As a condition for cooperation, the partner must establish its own Child Safeguarding policy⁶ within the first year of project support. TDH assists with the development or adaptation of these policies and organises workshops as needed.
- ✓ The programme coordination team, with support from the Safeguarding Focal Points, **monitors the implementation** and compliance with the policy. TDH provides a monitoring checklist for this purpose.
- ✓ The partner organisation is obliged to **notify Terre des Hommes of any sensitive report** suggesting a risk to Child Safeguarding in the project. Notification should be made ideally within 48 hours of initial assessment and must outline the initial steps taken and further planned actions to safeguard the child, investigate the case, hold the perpetrator accountable, and mitigate future risks.
- ✓ The partner organisation must ensure that its Child Safeguarding provisions also govern its collaboration with **volunteers, interns, service providers, and contractors**.
- ✓ Child Safeguarding must be a recurring topic at **national and regional partner meetings** and during project visits. Where relevant, safeguarding of children in humanitarian crises should also be addressed.
- ✓ In the case of **cluster projects** funded by multiple donors, Child Safeguarding must be included in the cooperation agreement.

4.2 Child Safeguarding during humanitarian situations

In humanitarian crises – whether caused by humans or natural disasters – a state of emergency generally exists. Established safe spaces such as families or schools may collapse, leading to a significantly increased risk of violence against children. It is therefore crucial that safeguarding measures are adapted to the specific context and implemented accordingly. TDH also embeds its Child Safeguarding standards at an institutional level within the »Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action« of the global network »The Alliance«⁷ and the »Core Humanitarian Standard«⁸.

Partner organisations must likewise adapt their institutional safeguarding measures to the humanitarian context, taking into account increased safety risks. They commit to this by

⁵ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Child-safeguarding-in-programme-work.aspx>

⁶ However, the child safeguarding policy can also be embedded in a broader »Safeguarding Policy«

⁷ <https://alliancecpa.org/en/cpms-child-protection-minimum-standards>

⁸ <https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/>

developing a corresponding policy. Qualified Terre des Hommes staff support them in this process and in the implementation of »[The Alliance's Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#)«. TDH emphasises that its support is provided unconditionally.

TDH and its partner organisations coordinate closely with local child safeguarding actors – such as ministries or social service departments, UN clusters or similar mechanisms, UN agencies like UNICEF or IOM, and other non-governmental organisations in the respective countries– to access and share up-to-date information.

Considering increased safety risks, partner organisations engaged in humanitarian aid are required to:

- - designate a staff member responsible for Child Safeguarding, specifically for the humanitarian context,
 - conduct initial and regular risk assessments related to Child Safeguarding and security,
 - develop and regularly update a risk mitigation plan,
 - obtain references or police clearance certificates for newly hired staff and assess their suitability and attitude toward Child Safeguarding,
 - establish a binding code of conduct for work involving children,
 - strictly adhere to safeguarding standards in media work to ensure the safety of children and their families (see Section 6),
 - establish accessible feedback mechanisms and complaint procedures for staff and children,
 - commit to responding immediately to reports or observations of suspected violence against children and to inform Terre des Hommes. The internal [reporting platform](#)⁹ at TDH is available for this purpose.
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4.3 Visits to TDH Programmes

Projects funded by Terre des Hommes and events organised within the scope of its programmes are regularly visited by short-term contractors, journalists, photographers, service providers, cooperation partners, ambassadors, members, supporters, volunteers, and donors.

All TDH staff responsible for organising and coordinating project visits must observe the following Child Safeguarding measures:

⁹ <https://terre-des-hommes.hinweis.digital/?lang=en>

- All trips to Terre des Hommes projects - whether to visit projects or attend events - must be coordinated through the Head Office or the concerned Regional Office.
- A staff member from Terre des Hommes or the concerned partner organisation must accompany the visitors.
- Prior to travel, visitors must be provided with relevant information regarding Child Safeguarding at the project site and are required to sign a commitment to comply with the »Code of Conduct for Visits to Terre des Hommes Programmes«.
- The signed declaration of commitment to Child Safeguarding is to be archived by the responsible safeguarding focal person or uploaded into the project database.
- Any additional safeguarding requirements set by the project partner must also be followed.
- The same rules outlined under Section 6 »Media Work and Communications« apply to the production of media with or about children.
- If, during such a trip, the suspicion of a child safeguarding violation arises or violence against children is observed, the incident must be reported through the internal TDH [reporting platform](#)¹⁰.

5. Child Participation

Terre des Hommes promotes the engagement of children and young people in its programme regions abroad and in Germany. Terre des Hommes adheres to the relevant Child Safeguarding regulations as defined by applicable national laws. As a rule, Terre des Hommes operates in accordance with the following principles.

5.1 Principles

Terre des Hommes empowers children to advocate for their rights – including the right to safeguarding and to speak up if they experience harm in connection with their involvement in TDH programmes or those of partner organisations.

In its work with Child Participation, Terre des Hommes adheres to the following principles:

- I. Every child is granted **equal opportunities to participate**, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, appearance, ethnicity, origin, religion, age, ability, or any other status. Information about planned activities must be openly shared in places that are visible and accessible to all children. These opportunities for

¹⁰ <https://terre-des-hommes.hinweis.digital/?lang=en>

participation must be appropriate to the age or maturity of the child. When participation is limited, the reason must be clearly explained. The child should have the opportunity to be represented by another child or an adult, following a transparent selection criteria and the child's involvement in choosing the representative.

- II. Participation must be **voluntary**. No child shall be forced or persuaded to take part. Children must not be penalized or criticized for choosing not to participate and may withdraw at any time.
- III. Terre des Hommes and its partner organisations regularly offer **workshops to children about their rights**, prevention of violence, self-protection, and Child Safeguarding measures.
- IV. Parents, legal guardians, or the child's primary caregiver¹¹ must be informed in a clear and understandable manner about the child's participation in an event or activity. The legal representatives must provide **written consent**. If participation requires absence from school for a certain period, additional written authorization from the school authorities may be required. The authorization document must clearly indicate that the parents/ guardians and the school authorities understand the nature of the child's involvement or participation in the activities.
- V. Prior to taking or publishing photos, or conducting interviews with children, explicit consent and **signed permission** must be obtained from the children themselves, their parents or legal guardians.

5.2 Child Participation in Events¹²

Some children involved in Terre des Hommes projects serve as delegates to the TDH Delegates' Conference, attend partner meetings, or participate in events, expert conferences, exchange programmes, or trainings (referred to as »events«). To reach these events, children travel within their country or abroad. The trips include travel by train, bus, and air, as well as overnight stays en route and at the destination. TDH staff responsible for the child's participation must adhere to the following:

¹¹ Primary caregivers are adults primarily responsible for a child's well-being in the absence of parents or legal guardian, such as for unaccompanied children on the move.

¹² Dialogue Works: Standards for Child Participation

Before the Event:

I. Risk Assessment

The responsible TDH staff, together with the accompanying partner organisation and, if applicable, the children themselves, conduct a [risk assessment](#)¹³ regarding Child Safeguarding for the planned event. This risk assessment must be reviewed and approved by a designated Child Safeguarding focal person. Consequently, TDH staff members implement appropriate measures to prepare for, eliminate or mitigate identified risks.

II. Information and Consent

Children and their parents, legal guardians, or primary caregivers will be informed about the upcoming trip in a child-friendly manner. They will receive all relevant information, including the exact destination, travel dates, cultural and geographical conditions at the destination, as well as safeguarding measures during travel and stay, and contact persons and public officials (including border officials, etc.).

The parents, legal guardians of the children must [approve](#)¹⁴ the trip in advance, and all necessary travel documents must be provided. As needed, the child will receive support to acquire specific travel essentials, such as luggage, clothing, and other items, either in their home country or in the destination country.

III. Transit and Travel

TDH ensures safe transit to and from the departure point and provides alternative safe travel options in case of short-notice changes, cancellations, or delays in travel plans. Where feasible, TDH or the partner organisation arranges suitable travel insurance.

Accompaniment: During travel, children will be accompanied by at least one adult—typically a staff member from the partner organisation who knows the child well, or a parent. Girls may either be accompanied by a woman or their father. With the consent of the parents or legal guardian the accompanying adult assumes responsibility for supervising the child. The accompanying adult must be informed about the code of conduct and confirm their commitment to abide by signing an agreement.

In exceptional cases, and where legally permitted and assessed as safe, children aged 16 and over may travel internationally without accompaniment to participate

¹³ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Child-safeguarding-in-programme-work.aspx>

¹⁴ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Safe-Participation-of-children.aspx>

in an event. This is contingent upon a low safety risk, the young person's prior experience with travel and event participation, and the consent of their parents or legal guardians. For children aged 14 and above, unaccompanied domestic travel may be permitted under similar conditions. TDH will assess potential risks and implement appropriate safeguarding measures accordingly.

IV. Place of event

Terre des Hommes reviews the safety standards of the host organisation and accommodation and takes steps to address or mitigate any identified safety and security gaps. The host organisation is also informed about Terre des Hommes' Code of Conduct or, alternatively, a joint code of conduct is developed and agreed upon.

During the Event:

- I. Terre des Hommes takes comprehensive measures to ensure the safety, protection and comfort of children at both the destination and event venue. These measures include, but are not limited to:
 - providing appropriate and separate accommodation that respect gender, cultural, and religious considerations;
 - ensuring adequate rest periods;
 - offering language interpretation services;
 - providing food that aligns with the child's health needs and cultural or religious practices;
 - guaranteeing access to communication tools, such as mobile phones or the Internet.
 - giving them relevant information to help them navigate the local environment safely and confidently.
- II. TDH ensures compliance with legal child and youth protection regulations. In mixed groups of adults and minors, a strict policy of no alcohol consumption, no drug use, and no visits to bars, nightclubs, or discotheques applies throughout the entire stay. Everyone is expected to refrain from smoking and vaping in the presence of children and adolescents. Adults are expected to uphold their responsibility as role models.
- III. During large events with a higher number of attendees, a designated safe retreat area will be set up where children can rest or practice their religious and cultural

customs.

- IV. Terre des Hommes designates fixed contact persons who will
 - be available at all times or during specified hours to receive feedback, complaints, or concerns;
 - mediate conflicts that may arise within the group.
- V. Terre des Hommes provides adequate language interpretation. The role of interpreters must be clearly defined, dual responsibilities should be avoided, and sufficient rest periods must be observed. Interpreters are also required to sign the Code of Conduct for Child Safeguarding.
- VI. Any Child Safeguarding violations must be reported to TDH's internal reporting office. The responsible regional Safeguarding Focal Points or the global Safeguarding Focal Point at the Head Office may also be contacted for further advice.

After the Event:

- I. As part of the debriefing process following the event and associated travel, children and young people are given a space to share and process their experiences. Particular sensitivity is applied to identify whether any child felt uncomfortable at any point or whether any incident of boundary violation or misconduct towards a child occurred. Terre des Hommes staff, partner organisations, and accompanying adults are urged to give special attention to this phase.
- II. TDH offers ongoing availability for confidential conversation should any concerns arise after the event, including instances of inappropriate behaviour or breaches of personal boundaries. Where appropriate, contact information for external specialised counselling services will also be provided.
- III. If a Child Safeguarding concern is reported, Terre des Hommes takes it seriously, ensures the safety and well-being of the child, and initiates a thorough case assessment. TDH will proceed as described in section »7. Responding to Child Safeguarding Violations« and the [complaints policy](https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/DataProtection/SitePages/I-have-a-complaint-What-should-I-do-.aspx)¹⁵.

¹⁵ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/DataProtection/SitePages/I-have-a-complaint-What-should-I-do-.aspx>

5.3 Child Participation in Online Events

To ensure the safe participation of children in online events, Terre des Hommes implements the following safeguarding standards:

- ✓ TDH ensures the use of secure and secured software, compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and by applying firewalls and encryption, for all online events.
- ✓ Access to the online event is regulated through prior registration, password protection, and approval by the organising TDH office.
- ✓ TDH moderators or participants have the option to disable video transmission, microphone, and chat functionalities.
- ✓ Each participating child may join using an alias and without disclosing their country of origin or current location.
- ✓ If there is an intention to record the event, the consent of all participants must be obtained at the beginning.

Further guidance can be found in the TDH »[Quick Guide for Organisers of Online Events](#)«.

5.4 Interviews with children

For various purposes –such as advocacy or public relations– children from TDH-supported projects may be questioned or interviewed by trained Terre des Hommes staff, partner organisation staff, commissioned professionals, or journalists. The following measures must be observed and ensured by the responsible TDH staff:

Prior to the Interview:

I. Risk Assessment

Before the interview, a thorough risk assessment must be conducted to evaluate any potential risks to the child during the interview process or through the publication of its content. Appropriate mitigation measures must be implemented to reduce these risks. TDH staff use the TDH [Risk Assessment Matrix](#)¹⁶ to guide this process.

¹⁶ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Safe-Participation-of-children.aspx>

II. Information & Familiarisation

Before the interview, the child must be thoroughly informed about the process of the interview and its purpose in an age-appropriate and accessible manner. With the child's general consent to participate, they are involved in shaping the structure of the interview. To familiarize the child with the interview setting, alleviate fears and concerns, and create a comfortable atmosphere, an introductory meeting is held between the child and the TDH public relations officer or the journalist prior to the interview. This meeting is preferably conducted in person.

This meeting may also be used to discuss the interview flow and any questions the child may have.

The child is informed that

- They may stop or withdraw from the interview at any time.
- The work of TDH and its partner organisations is not dependent on their participation in the interview.
- They are not obliged to answer any question (a signal or sign may be agreed to indicate this).
- They have the right to withdraw their consent for publication even after the interview has taken place.

These measures aim to ensure that the child retains maximum control over their participation and can participate freely and without pressure.

III. Written Consent

After being fully informed, written consent is obtained from the child as well as from their parent(s) or legal guardian for both the interview and any potential publication.

IV. Timing and Location

The interview is scheduled for a day and time that is suitable for the child—never late in the evening or at night, though weekends may be considered. The child is given the opportunity to help decide on the location and may choose a trusted person to be present during the interview.

- V. Interview questions, especially those concerning sensitive topics related to the child, will be coordinated beforehand with a social worker or psychologist.

During the Interview:

- I. A **comfortable atmosphere** will be established at the interview location. This may include offering a soft drink and a snack. A social worker or psychologist should be present, especially when addressing sensitive topics, as there is always a risk of triggers that can evoke strong emotions.
- II. Whenever possible, the interview is conducted in the child's preferred **language**. Alternatively, a trusted person (e.g., a project partner or family member) may interpret. If an interpreter is used, they should be introduced to the child in advance and must commit to the Child Safeguarding standards. Questions must be phrased in clear and age-appropriate language.
- III. Money, gifts or promises shall **not** be given in exchange for the interview. A small token as a sign of appreciation that shall not exceed the equivalent of EUR 5 in value could be offered.
- IV. Interviews with children shall be conducted in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. If the **child shows signs of discomfort or distress**, the interview must be paused or stopped altogether.
- V. If, during the interview, it becomes evident that the **child is at risk** (e.g., exposed to exploitative child labour, experiencing violence at home or in the community), this must be reported to the responsible TDH project coordinator and/or via the internal [TDH reporting office](#)¹⁷.

After the Interview

- I. The interview is followed by a debriefing with the child. The key messages from the interview are reviewed and agreed upon with the child. The child is informed about when and where the interview will be published. Wherever possible, feedback is also provided to the parents or legal guardian on how the interview went.
- II. Depending on the assessed level of risk or the child's preference, and with their consent, the child's identity will be anonymised (see section 6.3).
- III. TDH ensures that the child receives a copy of the final product resulting from the interview ((e.g. article, study, or report).
- IV. The child may contact TDH at any time after the interview to raise questions, provide feedback, or to withdraw consent for publication. Likewise, TDH staff are

¹⁷ <https://terre-des-hommes.hinweis.digital/?lang=en>

expected to monitor whether any risk emerges for the child as a result of the interview or publication and take appropriate action.

Collaboration with Journalists

Journalists are required to sign a contract with TDH committing to compliance with the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The responsible TDH staff member or project partner informs the journalists about the procedures outlined in section 5.4 and communicates any agreements made with the child.

TDH or the respective project partner acts as an intermediary contact at all times and does not share the child's direct contact details with journalists.

6. Media Work and Communications

When portraying the work of Terre des Hommes –particularly the lives, realities, and activities of children– in media content, it is essential to ensure that Child Safeguarding standards are strictly upheld. This encompasses both the media creation process and the final media product.

6.1 Visual language

Terre des Hommes uses photographs of children from its projects to raise awareness about the situation of children worldwide, to communicate the organisation's work, and to attract new members and donors. In doing so, children are depicted in a respectful manner, positive aspects of their lives are highlighted, their engagement is showcased with an emphasis on their strengths and positive emotions.

At the same time, the images may also point to the difficult or rights-violating conditions children face, evoking empathy and awareness among viewers. However, Terre des Hommes intentionally refrains from using graphic and distressing images of children that are designed to provoke an emotional response. In Terre des Hommes' visual communications, children are never depicted as passive victims - such as weak, helpless, desperate, or unclothed. Instead, images are carefully selected to present a nuanced perspective, portraying children as individuals with strengths, aspirations, and agency. Children's right to dignity and protection is upheld throughout the entire photography process. Thus, children are never shown in degrading or inappropriate poses, and images that exposes intimate and sensitive areas are strictly prohibited.

These principles also apply to the portrayal of children in the context of humanitarian crisis. However, in such cases, authentic images are used to reflect the real living conditions of children, which are often marked by hardship and deprivation in these settings.

Further guidance on Terre des Hommes' visual language can be found in the [Visual Language Traffic Light tool](#)¹⁸.

6.2 Non-Discriminatory Language

In its reporting, TDH uses language that is free from stigma and discrimination, consciously avoiding stereotypes and generalizations. Terminology with colonial, racist, or militaristic origins -- or language that reflects a specific ideological bias -- is not used. Children are authentically represented in their own words; direct quotes are part of their self-empowerment. TDH does not describe children with attributes or labels that reduce them to a single characteristic or circumstance. Fundamentally, TDH employs a »people-first« language approach. For instance, we use »child with a disability/impairment« instead of »disabled child«, »child living on the street« instead of »street child«, and »people experiencing poverty« instead of »poor people«. Deviations are only permissible in justified exceptional cases and are regulated more specifically in the [TDH Editorial Guidelines](#), which are regularly revised and adapted to technical innovations by the media team.

6.3 Public relations and Media Contacts

Media such as photos, videos, and texts reporting on TDH projects, events, and activities are requested through the TDH Regional Communications Officers (in the regional offices). For media production, in addition to the guidelines under section 5, TDH must ensure the following steps:

I. Risk Assessment

The project partner organisation will be informed about the media request and the necessity of adhering to Child Safeguarding standards. Before any media production takes place, children are adequately informed, and a risk assessment is conducted with those who voluntarily choose to participate. This assessment identifies potential risks to children associated with the creation, dissemination and storage of media content. Together with the participating children, appropriate risk mitigation measures are developed and implemented without delay. In case of doubt, the decision must always be taken in favour of the child's best interests. TDH provides a standardized [risk assessment matrix](#)¹⁹ to support this process.

¹⁸ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/Medien/SitePages/Neuer-Redaktionsleitfaden-und-Bildsprache-Ampel--F%C3%BCr-eine-einheitliche-Kommunikation.aspx>

¹⁹ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Safe-Participation-of-children.aspx>

II. Informed Consent

The project partner organisation ensures that written informed consent is obtained from the children and their parents or legal guardians prior to any media production and the use of such materials for Terre des Hommes' public communications. The official [TDH consent form](#)²⁰ must be used, which is aligned with the requirements of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As part of this process, the project partner organisation provides children and their caregivers with clear information about the purpose of the media production and any associated risks. The consent form clearly specifies which personal data TDH is permitted to publish.

III. Risk Assessment and Anonymity

The project partner must work together with the child to assess whether there is an elevated risk to the child's safety. Based on this assessment, they jointly decide whether the child's identity and location should be protected – for example, by using an alias and omitting any specific geographic references. In such cases, photos or videos must also not reveal identifiable details, such as the name or logo of a school in the background. These additional safeguarding measures are essential when there is a risk that children may face persecution, violence, re-traumatisation, or stigma. This may apply in particular to:

- Children who are survivors of sexual or other forms of violence,
- Children affected by HIV and AIDS or other diseases,
- Children who are accused of or have committed a criminal offence,
- Children who are or have been used as soldiers,
- Children who are displaced internally or across borders,
- Children who are working in politically sensitive contexts such as extractive industries,
- Children experiencing trauma (after natural disasters or armed conflicts, etc).

The extent to which the children need to be partially or fully anonymised is determined based on the following risk level:

Level 1: Low risk of violence or stigmatisation

Faces and location details may be published with the person's informed consent.

Level 2: Medium risk of violence or stigmatisation

²⁰ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/DataProtection/SitePages/Datenschutz-bei-Foto--Videoaufnahmen.aspx>

Faces and information about the approximate location may be published with the person's informed consent.

Level 3: High risk of violence or stigmatisation

Published images must not clearly reveal the child's face, and no location details that could lead to identification may be disclosed.

IV. Media database

The responsible TDH communication staff ensure that all created media materials are uploaded to the internal **TDH media database** together with the corresponding signed consent forms. If any consent forms are missing, they must be obtained retrospectively.

TDH will then publish the created media products in line with its organisational purposes and in accordance with the permissions granted through the consent process.

6.4 Social Media Guidelines

For its digital communication, Terre des Hommes uses digital communication channels like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, fundraising platforms, and an internal platform for member communication. All Terre des Hommes staff members are required to uphold Child Safeguarding standards and adhere to the organisation's [netiquette](#)²¹ in all communications across these platforms.

It is essential that everyone involved in digital communication remains aware of the potential risks of violating children's rights or breaching child safeguarding standards. Any incidents involving humiliation, discrimination, boundary violations, or sexually suggestive content related to children associated with Terre des Hommes must be reported to the designated child safeguarding focal points in the respective country or via the TDH [reporting platform](#)²² to the TDH reporting office. In addition, any kind of online misconduct can be reported to an independent online complaints platform, the police, or Interpol.

7. Responding to Child Safeguarding Violations

For the submission of reports concerning breaches of the Child Safeguarding policy and other violations, Terre des Hommes has set up an internal reporting office, which can be

²¹ <https://www.tdh.de/en/netiquette>

²² <https://terre-des-hommes.hinweis.digital/?lang=en>

reached through a digital [reporting platform](#). The procedure for submitting a report, along with the principles of complaint handling and the complaints process, are outlined in the [TDH Complaints Policy](#)²³.

In addition to the internal reporting office, accessible and child-friendly feedback and complaints mechanisms are made available within the projects. Responsible TDH staff members encourage project partners to implement appropriate tools such as dedicated complaint consultation hours, feedback forms after events, suggestion and feedback boxes, designated focal points, child safeguarding committees, or participatory approaches such as focus group discussions. Key excerpts from the TDH Child Safeguarding policy are made available in child-friendly formats and in multiple languages²⁴. Children are regularly informed about their rights, safeguarding standards, and the available channels for complaints and feedback.

Any feedback containing sensitive content or indicating that a child may be at risk must be acted upon immediately by the partner organisation and reported to TDH within 48 hours, wherever possible.

7.1 Assistance for the child concerned

Terre des Hommes has a duty of care to provide appropriate support to any child affected by a safeguarding concern. This responsibility is particularly critical in cases where harm has occurred through the actions of a Terre des Hommes staff member—whether employed or volunteering—or a person acting on behalf of Terre des Hommes. Terre des Hommes ensures that the necessary resources are made available to implement the following measures:

- If a child requires immediate protection, this is provided through access to a safe space and the support of a trusted person of the child's own choosing. Measures are taken to ensure that the suspected or accused individual is not able to approach the child or cause further harm.
- The child's parent(s) or legal guardian are informed, and the child's immediate needs—such as access to medical care or psychosocial support—are met.
- Where needed, Terre des Hommes facilitates access to psychosocial care for the affected child, ensuring that the child is able to speak freely without being influenced or pressured in any way.
- If the child consents to testify in court, the hearing must take place in a child-friendly environment and be conducted by trained professionals. In addition, psychologists and legal professionals with specialised training in child rights

²³ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/DataProtection/SitePages/I-have-a-complaint.-What-should-I-do-.aspx>

²⁴ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Child-Safeguarding.aspx>

should be involved to safeguard the best interests of the child throughout the legal process.

- Effective non-judicial agreements, such as processes of gradual reparation or efforts to strengthen child safeguarding within the child's environment must be taken independently of, or parallel to, the bringing of charges.
- The child must be kept informed about upcoming steps in the case process. With the child's consent –and depending on the child's age and the nature of the case–the child's legal primary caregivers should also be informed.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Terre des Hommes is committed to ongoing monitoring, evaluating, and, where necessary, adapting its child safeguarding procedures. The implementation and compliance with the Child Safeguarding policy and its procedural guidelines are the responsibility of all individuals covered under the policy's scope and extended application. The Executive Board ensures that the necessary technical, human, financial, and time resources are made available to fulfil these obligations. The Safeguarding Focal Point at the Head Office, supported by the Safeguarding Committee, leads the process of reviewing compliance with safeguarding standards and further developing safeguarding procedures and practices. That involves taking the steps with the aid of these instruments:

- ✓ In regular meetings of the Safeguarding Committees at both the Head Office and regional levels, the implementation of the annual child safeguarding action plans is monitored and further developed.
- ✓ Terre des Hommes conducts an [Annual Self-assessment](#)²⁵ using a structured questionnaire to gain an overall understanding of the implementation of key elements of the Child Safeguarding policy. This includes collaboration with partner organisations.
- ✓ A yearly narrative report highlights positive developments while also identifying gaps and areas for improvement. It forms the basis for annual action plans aiming to close gaps in the implementation of the policy and the procedural guidelines and mitigate the risks that have been noted.
- ✓ Each year, the entire policy and its procedural guidelines are reviewed for accuracy, effectiveness, and relevance. Proposed updates and the introduction of new standards or procedures are discussed within the Safeguarding-Committee and submitted to the Executive Board for approval. Any necessary changes will be taken into account in the annual action plan.

²⁵ <https://tdhgermany.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildProtection/SitePages/Child-safeguarding-in-programme-work.aspx>

- ✓ How Terre des Hommes partner organisations implement the Child Safeguarding policy will be regularly reviewed by the responsible Terre des Hommes staff during project visits, at annual partner meetings and in project reports, as well as through external evaluations.
- ✓ Terre des Hommes engages in knowledge exchange with specialised peer organisations at national and international levels to continuously strengthen its Child Safeguarding capacity.
- ✓ At the national level, Terre des Hommes actively participates in the Association of German Development and Humanitarian NGOs (VENRO). Internationally, Terre des Hommes is an active member of the »Safeguarding« working group of the Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF), which is a founding member of the global network »Keeping Children Safe«.
- ✓ Terre des Hommes Germany reports annually in its organisational report as well as in the annual report of the Terre des Hommes International Federation on the number of child safeguarding cases reported, the status of policy implementation, and ongoing developments in institutional safeguarding.