CCC-E
Consortium for
Climate Change
Ethiopia

Child Safeguarding Policy

Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E)

Policy Title:	Child Safeguarding Policy
Owner:	Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E)
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Policy Objective:	To ensure the protection, safety, and well-being of children in all CCCE programs, advocacy, campaigns, research activities, and community engagements, while fostering a child-safe organizational environment.
Other Related Policies:	Code of Conduct

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INTRODUCTION

The Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E) is a local, non-governmental organization committed to advancing environmental protection, climate justice, sustainable development, and inclusive climate governance in Ethiopia. CCC-E draws its work from the principles outlined in international and regional human rights instruments and aligns its operations with the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and other relevant national laws that guarantee the rights and protection of children.

Through its advocacy, research, public campaigns, capacity-building initiatives, and stakeholder consultations, CCC-E may engage directly or indirectly with children under the age of 18. CCC-E recognizes children as rights holders and acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that all organizational activities are carried out in a manner that safeguards children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In response, CCC-E has developed this Child Safeguarding Policy by adapting relevant global and national safeguarding standards to guide safe practice, accountability, and appropriate response across all its work.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this Child Safeguarding Policy is to:

- Affirm the commitment of the Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E) to protecting the rights, safety, and well-being of children in all areas of its work, including advocacy, research, public campaigns, consultations, capacity-building activities, and partnerships.
- Provide a clear framework to prevent, identify, report, and respond to all forms of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation that may occur through direct or indirect contact with children.
- Guide CCC-E staff, member organizations, partners, volunteers, and other representatives on their roles and responsibilities in creating and maintaining a child-safe organizational environment.

Establish clear standards of conduct and accountability mechanisms to ensure that all safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly, ethically, and in accordance with Ethiopian law and international child protection standards.

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POLICY STATEMENT

Children who come into contact with the Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E) through its advocacy, research, public campaigns, consultations, capacity-building initiatives, and partnerships must be safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from deliberate or inadvertent actions, omissions, and organizational failings that may place them at risk of abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, injury, or any other form of harm.

CCC-E recognizes safeguarding as a shared responsibility that applies to all individuals who represent or are associated with the organization. This duty of care is embedded in this Child Safeguarding Policy and reflected across CCC-E's systems, procedures, and organizational culture. CCCE adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse and exploitation.

This Policy Requires That:

- Children who come into direct or indirect contact with CCC-E are protected from all forms of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm at all times.
- Safeguarding considerations are fully integrated into CCC-E's advocacy, research, public engagement, campaigns, consultations, trainings, events, and partnerships.
- All CCC-E staff, board members, consortium members, partners, consultants, volunteers, interns, contractors, and visitors understand their safeguarding obligations and comply fully with this policy.
- All individuals representing CCC-E demonstrate the highest standards of professional and personal conduct when interacting with children and do not abuse the position of trust associated with representing the organization.
- CCCE applies strict child-safe recruitment, contracting, and partnership practices to ensure that only suitable individuals are engaged in activities that may involve contact with children.
- All CCC-E programs, projects, advocacy initiatives, and events are assessed for potential safeguarding risks to children, and appropriate measures are taken to reduce or eliminate identified risks.

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- Children, parents, caregivers, and community members are informed of their rights and the mechanisms available to raise safeguarding concerns.
- All safeguarding concerns, suspicions, or allegations are taken seriously, handled confidentially, and responded to promptly and appropriately in accordance with Ethiopian law and international child protection standards.
- Safe, accessible, and confidential reporting mechanisms are established and communicated to all stakeholders, including children and community members.
- Whistleblowers and those who raise safeguarding concerns in good faith are protected from retaliation or discrimination.
- CCC-E maintains effective systems for documenting, managing, and monitoring safeguarding cases, while prioritizing the best interests and safety of the child.
- Safeguarding awareness, training, and capacity-building are regularly provided to CCC-E representatives and partners to strengthen prevention and response.
- Organizational leadership at all levels actively promotes a child-safe culture and ensures accountability for safeguarding responsibilities.

CCC-E Recognizes That:

- All children are equal and entitled to protection regardless of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth, or any other status.
- All children have the inherent right to live free from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation.
- Any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights.
- Children are rights holders and must be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness in all interactions linked to CCC-E's work.
- CCC-E has a duty of care to ensure that its advocacy, research, campaigns, events, consultations, and partnerships do not expose children to harm, whether directly or indirectly.
- Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility that applies to all individuals representing or associated with CCC-E, without exception.

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Rules for Staff and Representatives

- Physically assault, hit, or cause physical harm to a child under any circumstance.
- Engage in any sexual activity or develop a sexual relationship with a child under the age of 18, regardless of the local age of consent; mistaken belief in a child's age is not an excuse.
- Develop relationships with children in a way that could be perceived as exploitative, inappropriate, or abusive.
- Act in ways that could put a child at risk, including emotional, psychological, or physical harm.
- Use language, gestures, or behavior that is offensive, degrading, threatening, sexually suggestive, or culturally inappropriate.
- Behave physically in a way that is intrusive, inappropriate, or sexually provocative.
- Invite or host a child from CCC-E activities in personal accommodation without prior written approval from management.
- Sleep in the same bed or unsafely share sleeping arrangements with a child participating in CCC-E programs unless explicitly approved for safety reasons.
- Perform personal or intimate tasks for a child that they can reasonably do themselves, except when necessary for their safety or well-being.
- Condone, facilitate, or participate in unsafe, illegal, or abusive behavior by children.
- Act to shame, humiliate, intimidate, or degrade a child in any form.
- Discriminate, favor, or treat children unfairly in CCC-E programs or activities.
- Mediate or negotiate any financial or informal settlements related to child abuse or exploitation cases.
- Spend excessive, unsupervised time alone with a child, particularly in remote or isolated locations during field work, campaigns, or community visits.
- Place themselves in situations that could expose them or CCC-E to allegations of misconduct or safeguarding breaches.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This Child Safeguarding Policy applies to:

- All CCC-E staff (full-time, part-time, temporary, consultants, and interns) who may come into contact with children through program activities.
- Volunteers, board members, consortium member organizations, and trustees engaged in any CCC-E program, campaign, research, or event.
- Partners, contractors, and consultants whose work or contractual relationship involves interaction with children, including during advocacy, research, fieldwork, or public campaigns.
- Visitors, donors, journalists, and media representatives who participate in or observe CCC-E programs or events where children are present.
- All CCC-E programs, projects, campaigns, trainings, workshops, and public events where children may be directly or indirectly involved.
- Digital and online engagements organized or managed by CCC-E where children may participate or be affected by CCC-E communications.
- Field activities, consultations, community outreach, and research projects that involve children as participants, beneficiaries, or community members.
- All organizational contexts, including during travel, transport, accommodation, and off-site activities, where children may come into contact with CCC-E representatives.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18 years, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Ethiopian law.
- **Child Safeguarding:** The responsibility and measures taken by CCCE to ensure that children are protected from all forms of harm, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, and unsafe practices that could occur as a result of CCC-E's activities, programs, or organizational operations.
- **Child Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in actual or potential harm to a child. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

- **Physical Abuse:** Any deliberate act that results in or could result in non-accidental physical harm to a child, including hitting, shaking, burning, or causing injury through unsafe practices.
- **Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**: Any sexual activity with a child under 18 years, including sexual exploitation, grooming, inappropriate touching, sexual harassment, exposure to sexual materials, or use of children in sexualized images or content.
- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse:** Actions that harm a child's self-esteem or emotional development, including verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, humiliation, or consistent neglect of emotional needs.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including adequate food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education, supervision, and emotional support, resulting in harm or risk of harm.
- **Exploitation:** The abuse of a child for personal, financial, political, or social gain, including using children for labor, advocacy, or media purposes in ways that compromise their safety, dignity, or rights.
- **Representative:** Any individual who acts on behalf of CCC-E, including staff, volunteers, interns, board members, consultants, contractors, partners, and visitors who may interact with children in the course of CCC-E's programs and activities.
- **Safeguarding Focal Person (SFP):** The designated individual responsible for overseeing child safeguarding within CCC-E, coordinating reporting, providing guidance, and ensuring appropriate response to safeguarding concerns.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

CCC-E office procedures must ensure that safeguarding is integrated into all levels of the organization and its operations. These procedures are designed to create a safe environment for children who may come into contact with CCC-E programs, events, campaigns, or advocacy activities.

- All CCC-E staff, consortium members, partners, and representatives must be fully aware of the risks of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm, including risks that may arise through CCCE activities. Children, their parents, caregivers, and community members

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must be informed about the standards of behavior they can expect from CCC-E representatives and the mechanisms available to raise safeguarding concerns.

- All CCCE staff, partners, and representatives are responsible for minimizing risks and taking proactive measures to prevent harm to children. Managers and supervisors must ensure that programmatic and advocacy activities are conducted in a safe environment where children's rights are respected and safeguarded.
- All representatives must understand when and how to report safeguarding concerns. Procedures must clearly outline the steps to take if abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other harm is suspected or observed.
- CCC-E will take immediate and appropriate action to safeguard children and provide support to any child or family affected by potential abuse or exploitation. This includes liaising with relevant authorities in line with Ethiopian law and ensuring the child's well-being is prioritized.
- Prior to or at the time of hiring, all CCC-E staff and representatives must receive and understand:
  - This Child Safeguarding Policy
  - Local implementation procedures
  - The CCC-E Code of Conduct
- Visitors, donors, media representatives, and other non-staff individuals must receive a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy and be informed that compliance is mandatory while engaging with CCC-E activities or programs.
- All implementing partners or organizations with a contractual relationship with CCC-E whose staff may have contact with children must include in their agreements:
  - Compliance with CCC-E's Child Safeguarding Policy or an equivalent safeguarding policy that meets CCC-E's standards.
  - Adherence to the CCC-E Code of Conduct.
- Any breaches of this policy must be reported immediately to the designated Safeguarding Focal Person. All breaches will be investigated in accordance with CCC-E procedures, and disciplinary measures may include suspension or dismissal, depending on the severity of the incident.

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REPORTING PROCEDURES

- **Responsible Parties-** All CCC-E staff, board members, consortium member organizations, partners, consultants, interns, volunteers, and contractors are required to report any safeguarding concern involving a child encountered through CCC-E activities.
- **Nature of Concerns-** Reports must include any suspicion, observation, disclosure, or allegation of child abuse, exploitation, neglect, inappropriate behavior, or policy breach that may place a child at risk of harm.
- **Reporting Channels-** Concerns should be reported immediately, or within 24 hours, to the Child Safeguarding Focal Person (SFP) or, if unavailable or implicated, directly to the Executive Director. Reports may be verbal or written, but verbal reports must be documented promptly.
- **Confidentiality and Protection-** All reports are treated with strict confidentiality. CCC-E ensures protection of the child, the reporter acting in good faith, and any other individuals involved from retaliation, discrimination, or further harm.
- **Immediate Measures-** Upon receipt, the SFP or Executive Director will conduct a rapid risk assessment and implement immediate measures to ensure the child's safety, including referral to appropriate authorities as required by Ethiopian law.
- **Investigation and Response-** Safeguarding concerns will be reviewed promptly and objectively. Verified breaches of policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, termination, or legal action.
- **Documentation and Follow-Up-** All cases will be documented securely, monitored, and followed up to ensure resolution, support for the child, and organizational learning to strengthen safeguarding practices.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

- **Promote a Culture of Openness:** Encourage an organizational environment where safeguarding concerns can be raised, discussed, and addressed without fear of retaliation. All staff and representatives should feel empowered to speak up if they observe or suspect a safeguarding risk.
- **Accountability and Monitoring:** Supervisors, managers, and the Child Safeguarding Focal Person must maintain oversight of activities involving children to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards. Poor practices or potentially harmful behaviors should be identified and addressed promptly.

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- **Empower Children and Communities:** Children, caregivers, and community members should be informed of their rights, what constitutes safe and unsafe behavior, and the mechanisms available for reporting concerns. Children should be engaged in age-appropriate ways to participate in safeguarding discussions.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** CCC-E will provide induction, regular training, and refresher sessions on child safeguarding for all staff, representatives, and partners. This includes practical guidance on recognizing abuse, reporting procedures, risk mitigation, and safe engagement practices.
- **Safe Media and Communications Practices:** When taking photographs, recording videos, or sharing case stories involving children, staff and representatives must ensure dignity, consent, and privacy. Children must not be depicted in ways that could compromise their safety or expose them to harm.
- **Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity:** Staff and representatives should be aware of cultural, traditional, or social practices that may place children at risk, such as early marriage, harmful labor practices, or other forms of exploitation. Such practices must be challenged in line with safeguarding standards.
- **Avoid Conflict of Interest:** Representatives should not act as mediators or negotiators in matters of abuse, exploitation, or financial settlements involving children. Decisions affecting child protection must be made transparently and by authorized personnel only.
- **Continuous Learning:** CCC-E encourages reflection, learning, and feedback to improve safeguarding practices. Lessons from incidents, audits, or field experiences should be used to strengthen policies, procedures, and organizational culture.

MONITORING AND GOVERNANCE

The Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E) will review this Child Safeguarding Policy every three years, or sooner if required due to changes in Ethiopian law, organizational operations, or lessons learned from safeguarding incidents.

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all CCC-E staff, consortium members, partners, and representatives, with oversight provided by the Executive Director and the designated

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Child Safeguarding Focal Person. The CCC-E leadership team will ensure that the policy is actively applied across all programs, campaigns, research activities, trainings, and community engagements.

An annual audit will be conducted by CCC-E's governing body to assess the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures, compliance with policy requirements, and any areas requiring improvement. Findings from these audits will be used to update procedures, strengthen safeguarding practices, and ensure continuous learning and accountability across the organization.

The Executive Director of the Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E) holds overall responsibility for establishing a managerial and organizational environment that enables and facilitates the effective implementation of all aspects of this Child Safeguarding Policy.

The Executive Director is accountable for the development, oversight, and implementation of local procedures and systems that operationalize this policy across all programs, campaigns, research initiatives, trainings, and community engagements.

Responsibility for specific safeguarding functions may be delegated to key personnel, including designated Child Safeguarding Focal Points, program managers, and team leaders, to ensure that safeguarding practices are embedded consistently at all levels of the organization. The Executive Director retains ultimate oversight and ensures that delegated responsibilities are properly monitored and supported.

We, the undersigned members of the Board of Directors of the Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia (CCC-E), acknowledge the necessity of a formal Child Safeguarding Policy to define the standards of conduct, roles, responsibilities, and relationships that must exist among CCC-E staff, representatives, partners, and other stakeholders in their interactions with children. Having reviewed the policy, we hereby adopt this Child Safeguarding Policy as the official guidance for CCC-E to ensure the protection, safety, and well-being of all children who come into contact with the organization's programs, campaigns, research activities, and community initiatives.

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