

## Child Protection Policy

The objective of AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center’s Child Protection Policy is to promote the safety and wellbeing of all children. Children are one of the major beneficiaries of AVRDC’s programs, which are designed to alleviate poverty and malnutrition in developing countries through the increased production and consumption of health-promoting vegetables. While AVRDC’s training activities may sometimes directly involve children, normally the Center works through their families, teachers and other adults. It is AVRDC’s policy to ensure that Center’s staff and people associated with the Center are aware of and prepared to comply with its Child Protection Policy.

### Guiding Principles

AVRDC’s child protection policy is guided by these principles:

**Zero tolerance of child abuse:** Child abuse in any form is not tolerated by AVRDC. AVRDC will not knowingly engage, directly or indirectly, anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children, nor work in partnership with any individual or organization that poses an unacceptable risk.

**Sharing responsibility for child protection:** To manage and reduce risk to children, AVRDC requires the active support and cooperation of research and development partners. This Policy is available at [avrdc.org](http://avrdc.org).

### Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to all AVRDC staff, consultants and volunteers.

A child under this policy is defined as a person below 18 years of age.

For staff members, the provisions of the Child Protection policy will be within the scope of Clause 2.7 (harassment and discrimination clause) of AVRDC’s Human Resources Policy. All contracts and agreements with project partners and contractors will ensure that appropriate safeguards are available to protect children from abuse

### Code of Conduct

In their work, the staff of AVRDC and partners will:

- treat children with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
- not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate;
- not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts;
- not use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras inappropriately, in a way that undermines the dignity of children;
- refrain from physical punishment of children;

- refrain from hiring children for labor inappropriate for their age, or which interferes with their education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;
- comply with all relevant national and local legislation, including labor laws in relation to child labor;
- use common sense to avoid actions or behaviors that could be construed as child abuse;
- wherever possible have another adult to be present while working with children; and
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

## **Use of Images of Children for Work-related Purposes**

The use of images of children for work-related purposes will be done in line with the concept of informed consent covered under the section 'Research on Human Subjects' in AVRDC's Code of Ethics, available on AVRDC's website at [avrdc.org](http://avrdc.org).

When photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, the Center's staff will:

- before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- before photographing or filming a child, explain how the photograph or film will be used and obtain informed consent from the child and a parent or guardian of the child;
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

## **Compliance Processes**

### **Recruitment & Selection**

After the Child Protection Policy comes into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015, while recruiting staff, consultants, volunteers that are likely to work with children as part of their job responsibilities, AVRDC will:

- ensure that the recruited person has no criminal convictions related to child abuse through formal police checks (from home country for foreigners) or a letter from community authority if a check cannot be obtained;
- conduct at least two verbal reference checks;
- ask at least one child protection related question in interviews; and
- on appointment the concerned staff will be provided with the Child Protection Policy along with other policy documents and will be required to acknowledge compliance to the policies.

### **Orientation & Training**

New staff, as well as others will be periodically briefed about the Child Protection Policy, the expected behavior while working with children, the nature of child abuses, their responsibility in prevention and protection in a likely child abuse situation and the reporting mechanisms.

### **Reporting concerns**

Any breach of this policy or code of conduct by AVRDC personnel must be reported immediately or as soon as possible to the following authorities:

- at headquarters to the Director of Human Resources or
- in the regions to the respective Regional Directors.

Any person who has observed a concern or breach of our policy by AVRDC staff/consultant/volunteer can report the incident. The above authorized personnel will hold investigations to establish facts. Appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated by the disciplinary authority under the Center's disciplinary procedures. If the complaint of abuse is against the staff of a partner or contractor, the parties involved will be informed/asked to withdraw the person from AVRDC activities and urged to take appropriate disciplinary actions as deemed fit under the partner/contractor organization policies. In the event that criminal activity may be involved, AVRDC will notify the appropriate authorities (including embassies when foreigners are involved).

### **Authorization of the policy**

This policy has been reviewed and authorized by the Director General of AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center and will be effective from 1 September 2015. The policy will be reviewed every five years for its suitability and appropriateness.