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# Service Civil International Child Safeguarding Policy

**2023\***

**\*approved by IEC to be ratified by ICM**



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## **1. Purpose, scope and audience**

### **1.1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Service Civil International (SCI) Child Safeguarding Policy (“Policy”) is to provide a framework for ensuring that SCI programmes are designed and implemented with the best interests of the child in mind. In particular, it aims to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect in all SCI programmes, preventative actions are prioritised, and accountability is ensured.

### **1.2. Scope**

This Policy applies to all SCI personnel including staff, interns, consultants, and volunteers at any level and in any location. In addition, this Policy also defines what is expected from SCI branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors with regard to child safeguarding and reporting of suspicions of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children in all programming connected to SCI.

## **2. Document detail**

### **2.1. Background**

SCI recognizes that all children have the right to protection from violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

SCI aims to ensure that the “best interests of the child” principle, as described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, guides all decisions related to the children we serve and interact with in all settings. This is regardless of their nationality, migration status, disability status, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, socio-economic status, family background, criminal record, physical or mental health, or any other differentiating factor.

SCI acknowledges that children may have increased vulnerabilities to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect due to their dependence on others and lack of equal power with adults; in addition, children may have particular needs based on their age, gender, disability status, and other factors.



## 2.2. Our actions

SCI is committed to safeguarding children through the following means.

**Awareness:** SCI shall ensure that all SCI personnel, branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors are aware of the risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect against children; relevant local laws; and their responsibilities and obligations towards children, including how they are expected to interact with children and what to do in case any concerns about a child's safety are suspected, observed or reported.

This Policy should be communicated to all relevant personnel, branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors through a variety of approaches including inclusion in induction and/or onboarding, online education sessions, and mainstreaming into programming tools across sectors. Prior to beginning employment with SCI, individuals are required to certify that they have read and understand this Policy, which is deemed an integral part of all employment contracts.

SCI shall ensure that it briefs all personnel on the Policy.

**Prevention:** SCI shall ensure safeguarding measures will be applied by all SCI personnel, branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors who interact with children. Safeguarding measures include systematically checking with prior employers to ensure potential hires do not pose a threat to children, having personnel confirm that they have not harmed children in the past<sup>1</sup>, creating awareness of child safeguarding for all personnel, and conducting risk analyses of all SCI programmes and developing action plans for programmes to improve child safeguarding. Moreover, it encompasses ensuring children participate in decisions that affect them to the fullest extent possible, and systematically adopting child-friendly approaches that are easily understood by and accessible to children.

**Reporting:** SCI shall ensure that all personnel, branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors report any concerns relating to violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect against children; have knowledge of and access to appropriate referral mechanisms; and are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect of children.

**Responding:** SCI shall ensure that appropriate action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, at the time of application to any job opportunity the following statement appears: "I hereby confirm that to the best of my knowledge, I have not been convicted of, am not currently suspected of, or am not being prosecuted for any offence involving any type of harm to a child or children in any country. I declare that there is no element which could affect my suitability to work with children, and that I am aware of the seriousness of this declaration and I agree that I may be subject to a criminal record check to confirm my declaration." Applicants must agree to this statement in order to submit an application.



This includes implementing effective investigation processes, supporting survivors as appropriate and holding people accountable.

### 2.3. Guiding policy principles

#### **Principle 1: Zero-tolerance of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children**

SCI has a zero-tolerance approach to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect against children. Harming children through violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect will result in criminal, civil and/or disciplinary sanctions.

SCI will not knowingly engage — directly or indirectly — anyone who poses a risk to children.

SCI strives to minimise the risks of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect associated with its programmes, and to ensure its personnel, partners, contractors, and suppliers understand their responsibilities and obligations under this Policy.

#### **Principle 2: Recognition of the best interests of the child**

SCI is committed to upholding the rights of the child. In all actions concerning children or involving the participation of children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

#### **Principle 3: Decisions affecting children need to involve children**

SCI will aim to involve children in decisions that affect them in our programming. This includes engaging with children through consultations, providing feedback mechanisms, and supporting their leadership to help design or deliver programming, where possible and appropriate.

#### **Principle 4: Assess and manage child protection risk and impact**

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect against children, careful planning and monitoring can identify, mitigate, manage and reduce the risks to children that may be associated in any way with SCI programmes. SCI will take all reasonable actions to create systems and environments where children are safe. This includes conducting a child risk analysis for all programmes, developing necessary tools, and providing technical support to and monitoring of programmes.

#### **Principle 5: Sharing responsibility for child protection**

To effectively manage risks to children, SCI requires all personnel to take responsibility for child safeguarding. It also requires the commitment, support and cooperation of branches, groups, partners, contacts and individuals who help to deliver programmes administered by SCI or represent SCI in any way.



## **Principle 6: Procedural fairness**

Any allegation of violation of this Policy will be promptly assessed to determine whether it raises legitimate concerns and warrants an investigation. Where allegations are substantiated, disciplinary process will follow with action taken as required. Due process will be followed to ensure that those accused are provided with a full and adequate opportunity to defend themselves. Throughout the process, SCI will adopt a survivor-centred approach to ensure the safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination of children and wherever possible respect their wishes.

SCI's partners, contacts, suppliers and contractors are expected to adhere to this principle when responding to concerns or allegations of violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect against children. Lack of adherence may lead to immediate suspension of any agreement, contract or cooperation whatsoever, pending referral to the ICM.

## **2.4. Implementation with contractors and suppliers**

### **2.4.1. Contractors**

SCI expects its contractors to:

- Formally acknowledge and comply with the key principles of this Policy as described above;
- Immediately notify SCI if any personnel of the contractor or the partner are suspected of, accused of, charged with, arrested for, or convicted of criminal offences relating to violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect of children;
- Accept that any contract or agreement between SCI and that contractor may be immediately terminated when a breach(es) of the above mentioned key principles is substantiated, and/ or a failure to take appropriate action when a breach of these key principles is discovered, including reporting the allegations the same day the report is made to the contractor or partner;
- Accept that SCI may raise with the contractor issues of compliance and may request audits or other measures to assess compliance; and
- Ensure best efforts to promote and enhance child safeguarding measures and protective actions amongst those it has engaged to carry out the work. The relevant provisions required for the implementation of the above obligations will be inserted in all contracts and agreements signed by SCI.

### **2.4.2. Suppliers**

As part of its standard Terms and Conditions, SCI expects the following from its suppliers and companies providing services:



- Not to be subject to a judgement that has force of Res Judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity;
- To guarantee respect of fundamental rights and not be complicit in human rights abuses, including violence against children;
- Not to exploit child labour and forced labour and respect the basic social rights and working conditions in the countries involved. Suppliers will follow local and international standards for harmful, exploitative and dangerous work involving children when hiring. If the local and international standards are not the same, whichever standard has a higher age for employment will be used (e.g. age 18 rather than 16).

Suppliers' child safeguarding efforts/mechanisms will be an important criterion during the tender process.

As with contractors, SCI reserves the right to terminate any agreement or contract with suppliers immediately if the principles of this Policy are not met.

## **2.5. Accountability**

An annual report concerning the implementation status of this Policy, including any difficulties encountered with branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors, will be made to the International Executive Committee.

Branches and groups of SCI must have local child safeguarding policies, in line with the present policy.

## **2.6. Review of the Policy**

This Policy will be reviewed no later than every two years following the implementation date, or earlier if warranted or requested by the International Executive Committee.

## **2.7. Report of breaches**

Any staff member or volunteer who has reason to believe that a child may have experienced violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect, or that the safety or well-being of a child may be at risk, as a result of an action or abstention of SCI personnel, branches, groups, partners, contacts, suppliers, and contractors shall have the obligation to report it as soon as possible.

Reports can be made to the International Executive Committee, the International Coordinator, the Board of a Branch, or the Steering Group of a Working Group as appropriate.

It is important that all relevant information is shared when making a report. Relevant information can include what happened, who was involved, where, when, and how you



were informed. When making a report it is essential to respect the principle of confidentiality. SCI will ensure data protection systems are in place to protect data.

SCI is committed to protecting individuals who report a suspicion of breaches under this Policy from any form of retaliation. All reports and concerns raised by both personnel and individuals in the community will be properly considered, documented, and treated seriously, with care, discretion and in a reasonable timeframe. Any information shared concerning an allegation will be treated confidentiality by the relevant bodies listed above.

## 2.8. Visibility

This policy must be available online through SCI's website [sci.ngo](http://sci.ngo) and transparent to everyone who comes in contact with SCI.

## 3. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
International Executive Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that all SCI programming is designed with child safeguarding in mind</li> <li>● Review and approve this Policy</li> <li>● Hold Branches and Groups accountable to this Policy</li> <li>● Promote the Policy and its principles</li> <li>● Manage investigations related to the Policy</li> <li>● Help ensure the safety of those who report concerns</li> <li>● Provide support for implementation of the Policy</li> <li>● Advise on legal issues related to child safeguarding</li> <li>● Handle any referrals to third parties</li> <li>● Advise on investigation and/or disciplinary process for SCI personnel suspected of breaching this Policy</li> <li>● Advise on best ways to protect people who report concerns</li> </ul>
International Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure all programmes undergo a child risk analysis and take appropriate action based on the results</li> <li>● Ensure that the implementation and monitoring of the Policy and its compliance is budgeted for and appropriate mechanisms are in place</li> <li>● Ensure that Contractors and Suppliers fully understand and adhere to the standards of the Policy</li> <li>● Ensure development of appropriate tools to support this Policy</li> <li>● Manage roll-out of this Policy and support tools</li> <li>● Ensure capacity to support Branches and Groups to develop their own Policy</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make available technical support to conduct trainings as required to support this Policy Director of Human Resources</li> <li>● Ensure all prospective personnel are properly vetted to ensure they do not pose a risk to children</li> <li>● Ensure all prospective personnel are aware of this Policy and agree to abide by it as part of their contract</li> <li>● Ensure all relevant personnel are trained on the Policy and are committed to following the Policy</li> <li>● Help ensure the safety of people who report concerns (“Whistle-blowers”)</li> </ul>
Communication Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure aspects of the Policy relating to children’s images, communications and social media are implemented effectively</li> <li>● Make available the Policy and related documents and messages in SCI communication channels for the public and for partners</li> </ul>
All project officers and project coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote awareness and understanding of the Policy among SCI personnel</li> <li>● Ensure personnel have the knowledge, skills and commitment necessary for their positions to support child protection</li> <li>● Ensure personnel are held accountable to the Policy</li> <li>● Incorporate consideration of this Policy in planning, monitoring, budgeting, and resource allocation</li> <li>● Ensure that a child risk analysis is conducted, in coordination with the International Coordinator, for the programmes they manage</li> <li>● Support monitoring and compliance to the Policy as needed</li> </ul>
All personnel including all staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand, advocate and apply the Policy to their work</li> <li>● Report any suspected breaches of this Policy</li> <li>● Cooperate with any investigations into suspected breaches of this Policy</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX 1

### Examples of Unsafe and Prohibited Actions with Children

To help clarify our safeguarding approach, listed here are examples of prohibited behaviours. These apply to interactions between SCI personnel and volunteers and children we interact with, children that participate in our programmes and children we provide support to, or deliver services to through our programming. The examples are not exhaustive.

- Engaging in any sexual activity or having a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Marrying or becoming involved in an informal union with anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the allowable age of marriage in the country.
- Conducting “virginity tests” on a child.
- Participating in any ceremonies that involve genital cutting / mutilation of children.
- Developing relationships with children who could be deemed violent, abusive or exploitative.
- Hitting or otherwise physically assaulting or physically abusing children.
- Hiring children for labour that is dangerous, exploitative, or does not meet local and international child labour laws.
- Using language or behaviour towards children, in-person or online, that is reasonably perceived to be inappropriate, harassing, abusive, exploitative, sexually provocative, demeaning, discriminatory, or culturally inappropriate.
- Acting in ways intended or reasonably likely to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of psychological abuse.
- Discriminating against children based on factors such as gender, sex, disability, sexual identity, religion or caste.
- Allowing unsupervised time between a visitor to the local SCI project and a child during a programme or event. Visitors can include people from external agencies or SCI personnel.



- Failing to take reasonable actions to provide referrals for appropriate services to a child who reports or who has someone else report, or has signs of, experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect.
- Using any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media involving children in any way that harms a child, including accessing child exploitation material such as pornography through any medium at any time, regardless of whether it is during working hours and/or on SCI-issued electronic equipment.
- Not asking permission to take a photo or video of a child, posting children's images without the necessary permissions, depicting children in ways that are not dignified or when children are not fully clothed, and not adhering to the SCI child safeguarding standards for photography, images and social media.
- Undertaking activities or programmes with children without the express permission of their parents / guardians, or relevant authorities for street/separated/unaccompanied or other children who are alone.
- Working alone with a child somewhere that is secluded or where they cannot be observed by others.
- Inviting unaccompanied children into the personnel's home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger and, in this case, the personnel involved should advise their supervisor of the need for such action immediately.
- Sleeping in the same bed as a child or having a child / children with whom one is working stay overnight at a home unsupervised and without permission of the child's parents / guardians and the SCI programme manager.
- Leaving a child alone in a room or at an event when a child or guardian has expressed reservations about potential risks from an SCI personnel, contractor, or supplier.
- Giving alcohol or drugs to a child.



## APPENDIX 2

### Terms

**Adult** refers to a human being aged 18 years or more, regardless of the applicable legal definition of the term in the relevant country.

**Best interests of the child** broadly describe the well-being of a child. Such well-being is determined by a variety of individual circumstances (such as their gender, age, level of maturity and experiences) and other factors (such as the presence or absence of parents, quality of the relationships between the child and family/caregiver, and other risks or capacities).

There are three aspects to the Best Interests concept. They are:

- A child's basic right: children have a right to have their Best Interests assessed and taken as a primary consideration;
- A legal principle: if a legal provision is open to more than one interpretation, the interpretation which most effectively serves the child's Best Interests should be chosen;
- A rule of procedure: whenever a decision will affect a child, a group of children or children in general, the decision-making process must (a) evaluate the possible impact of the decision on the child(ren) concerned and (b) show that the right of children to have their Best Interests assessed and taken as a primary consideration has been explicitly taken into account.

**Branch** refers to any organisation under Article 5A of SCI Constitution

**Child** refers to a human being under the age of 18 years regardless of the applicable legal definition of the term in the relevant country<sup>2</sup>.

**Child abuse** refers to a deliberate act with actual or potential negative impacts upon the child's safety, wellbeing, dignity, and development. It is an intentional act that takes place in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

- Emotional or psychological abuse is when a caregiver acts or behaves in ways that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development of a child. Such acts include restricting a child's movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection, and other nonphysical forms of hostile

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<sup>2</sup> OHCHR. Convention on the Rights of the Child



treatment that deny the child an appropriate and supportive environment in which to thrive. They are acts that may result in psychological and social deficits in the growth of a child;

- Physical abuse is a caregiver's use of physical force to cause actual or possible physical injury or suffering;
- Sexual Abuse is when a caregiver involves a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society.

**Child exploitation** refers to when an individual in a position of power and / or trust takes or attempts to take advantage of a child for their own personal benefit, advantage, gratification, or profit. This personal benefit may take different forms: physical, sexual, financial, material, social, military, or political. Exploitation may involve remuneration in cash or in kind (such as social status, political power, documentation, freedom of movement, or access to opportunities, goods or services) to the child or to a third person/s.

Child exploitation may be divided into three categories, namely:

- Economic exploitation – slavery and slave-like practices, servitude, bonded or indentured labour.
- Harmful or hazardous labour – work that, by virtue of the child's age or the nature of the work, is prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare, among other things the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and children's association with armed forces and armed groups.
- Sexual exploitation – child prostitution, the trafficking or sale of children for sexual purposes (including forced marriage), child pornography and grooming for sexual purposes – including online.

**Child neglect** refers to the failure of a caregiver to protect a child from actual or potential harm or to fulfil that child's rights to survival, development, and wellbeing.

An act may be categorised as neglectful whether or not the caregiver intends to harm the child.

A harmful event is only considered neglect by a caregiver when

- a. The caregiver has the abilities, financial capacities, and knowledge to meet the child's needs, or;



- b. When the caregiver lacks the abilities, financial capacities, and knowledge necessary, and does not take steps to seek the assistance needed to protect or provide for the child.

**Child marriage** refers to a formal or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18 regardless of the applicable laws or customs in either country of the two children involved as well as the country where such union would take place. All child marriage is considered forced, as children are not able to give full consent to marriage.

**Child participation** refers to the manifestation of the right of every child to actively participate in local volunteer projects, to express their view, to have that view given all due consideration, to influence decision-making and to achieve change. It is the informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages, genders and disabilities, in any matter concerning them.

**Child protection** refers to the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children.

**Child safeguarding** refers to the broad obligation on SCI personnel, branches, groups, partners, contacts and suppliers to ensure that the design and delivery of programmes and organisational programmes are in the best interests of the child, do not expose children to adverse impacts, including the risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect and that any concerns about children's safety within the communities where they work are appropriately reported and responded to.

**Contact** refers to any organisation under Article 5C of SCI Constitution

**Contractor** refers to any person or organisation working jointly with or providing services to SCI.

**Group** refers to any organisation under Article 5B and 17D (Working Group) of SCI Constitution

**Partner** refers to any organisation under Article 5D of SCI Constitution

**Personnel** refers to any person in the service of SCI, including: the International Coordinator, Project Officers, Communication Officers, Tech Officers, Financial and Administration Officers, Branch and Group Officers, volunteers, interns and consultants.

**Programme** refers to SCI international short-term or long-term volunteer programmes, and where SCI is providing financial support or is having influence.



**Survivor-centred approach** creates a supportive environment in which the survivor's rights and wishes are respected, their safety is ensured, and they are treated with dignity and respect. A survivor-centred approach is based on the following guiding principles:

- **Safety:** The safety and security of the survivor and her/his children is the primary consideration.
- **Confidentiality:** Survivors have the right to choose to whom they will or will not tell their story, and information should only be shared with the informed consent of the survivor.
- **Respect:** All actions taken should be guided by respect for the choices, wishes, rights and dignity of the survivor. The role of helpers is to facilitate recovery and provide resources to aid the survivor.
- **Non-discrimination:** Survivors should receive equal and fair treatment regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.

**Staff** refers to any person in the service of SCI, to the exclusion of volunteers, interns and consultants.

**Violence against children** encompasses all acts that involve the intentional use of power or verbal or physical force, threatened or actual, against a child or against a group of children that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or children's health, survival, development, or dignity. Possible forms of harm include injury; death; disability; decreased psychological, psychosocial, or mental health; or maldevelopment.

**Working with children** means an SCI personnel, volunteer, individual, contractor or partner being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering, remunerated or other unpaid work.



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Practical Procedures for Workcamps**

Please find the Practical Procedures at the following link:

[📄 Practical\\_Procedures\\_2022.pdf](#)



## APPENDIX 4

### Code of Conduct of Volunteers

#### SCI Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Zero Tolerance for Discrimination, Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, and Abuse of Authority.

#### Definitions

1. Discrimination is any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status. Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated, or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority.
2. Harassment is any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassment normally implies a series of incidents. Disagreement on work performance or on other work-related issues is normally not considered harassment.
3. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between any persons. Anyone can be either the victim or the offender.
4. Abuse of authority is the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person. This is particularly serious when a person uses their influence, power or authority to improperly influence the career or employment conditions of another, including, but not limited to, appointment, assignment, contract renewal, performance evaluation or promotion. Abuse of authority may also include conduct that creates a hostile or offensive work environment which includes, but is not limited to, the use of intimidation, threats,



blackmail or coercion. Abuse of authority is particularly serious when accompanied by discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment. For the purposes of this document, discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority shall collectively be referred to as “prohibited conduct”.

### General Principles

1. Every volunteer has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to work in an environment free from prohibited conduct as described above.
2. In their interactions with others, volunteers are expected to act with tolerance, sensitivity and respect for differences. Any form of prohibited conduct in the workplace or in connection with work is a violation of these principles and may lead to disciplinary action, whether the prohibited conduct takes place in the workplace, in the course of official travel or an official mission, or in other settings in which it may have an impact on the workplace.
3. Duties of International volunteers

All volunteers are obliged to ensure that they do not engage in or condone behaviour which would constitute prohibited conduct with respect to their peers, supervisors, supervisees and other persons.

Volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Host’s policy on prohibited conduct and with the various options and internal channels available for addressing such conduct.

Inspired by the UN Volunteers Code of Conduct.

### SCI Protocols

To manage prohibited conduct concerns, the SCI Practical Procedures for Workcamps document contains a set of procedures for setting up, running and managing a workcamp. These protocols address a process for reporting concerns, as well as practical procedures for ensuring problems are minimised.

These protocols can be found in the SCI Practical Procedures document available on the Members Area, Quick access tab.

Related sections:

- Special Needs and Disabilities
- Volunteering with Children and working in Orphanages
- Dealing with problems
- Safety
- Evaluation



**Annexes:**

- Preparation of Volunteers
- Evaluation Forms
- Non- discrimination training and complaint procedure
- Volunteering in Orphanages - Guidelines and Preparation.

Updated April 2020



## APPENDIX 5

### Partnership Agreement

#### SCI Regulations on Partnership & Beyond

[as approved at the 77th ICM in 2017]

##### 1.1 Introduction

The Partnership Regulations apply for organisations who want to exchange volunteers with SCI in the framework of the following activities:

- Workcamps (excluding Teenage exchange projects)
- Long Term Voluntary projects (excluding European Voluntary Service)

The Regulations beyond Partnership define the terms of co-operation between SCI Branches and Groups in activities that are not included in the Partnership Regulations, e.g. seminars, trainings, EVS exchanges, international campaigns and all the other activities not explicitly mentioned in the Partnership Regulations.

Contacts and Partners are warmly invited to respect the Regulations beyond Partnership as well.

##### 1.2. Rights and duties of SCI Contacts and Partners

###### 1.2.1. Rights of Contacts and Partners

Contacts and Partners of SCI have

- the right to exchange volunteers with all Branches and Groups of SCI (unless there are specific restrictions)
- an account on the Online Placement System (OPS) and to the LTEG Database in order to publish projects in the SCI network
- access to the SCI mailing lists (except those for SCI only)
- access to the online resources of SCI with Partner rights (e.g. Members Area)
- the right to participate in the Exchange meetings (e.g. EEM, NSPM)



Access to the databases may be limited for some Contacts, according to Working Group decisions to limit exchange to certain SCI Branches or categories of volunteers.

Partners of SCI have the right to be member of SCI International Working Groups (normally the specific regional Working Group), under the condition that the Working Group approves the membership (see SCI Rules of Procedure for Working Groups, paragraphs 2.3.1 and 2.3.4, as approved by ICM 2010)

The International Secretariat regularly updates and publishes a list of all Contacts and Partners of SCI.

### **1.2.2. Criteria for Partnership**

A Partner of SCI has to fulfil the following requirements:

- a) To share the aims of SCI as stated in the SCI constitution, in particular:
  - Promotion of a culture of peace, international understanding and solidarity
  - Social justice
  - Sustainable development / lifestyle and respect for the environment.
- b) To work in a democratic way and to be open without discrimination to all people. The organisation has a democratic structure and involves volunteers and members without discrimination of gender, race, nationality, social status, political views and other possible grounds.
- c) To be a Non-profit organisation. The organisation commits itself to reinvest profits for volunteering activities.
- d) Not to have projects competing with paid labour.
- e) To regularly organise voluntary service activities that involve international volunteers. These activities have to be in line with the aims of SCI as stated in the SCI constitution.
- f) To facilitate the participation of volunteers with fewer opportunities in its voluntary service activities.

### **1.2.3. Responsibilities of Branches, Groups, Partners and Contacts**

All branches, groups, partners and contacts are expected to:

- Ensure a proper preparation of volunteers
- To communicate well with each other



- To carry out a proper evaluation of exchanges and pass on this evaluation to the regional WG/IEC in charge of evaluation (the 'competent body') of the contact/partner (see later in text)

## 1.3. Partnership Procedures

### 1.3.1. Procedure to start co-operation (recognition of Contact)

SCI can start to exchange volunteers with a new organisation ("Contact") at any time.

The recognition of a new Contact is proposed by a Branch, a Group, a Working Group (either thematic or regional), or the International Executive Committee (IEC).

The competence to approve exchange is with the respective regional Working Group, and for Contacts operating in countries for which no Working Group is competent, with the IEC. In case of mere bilateral pilot exchange it is enough to notify the competent body (regional Working Group or IEC), unless the exchange occurs with a country where SCI has a Branch or Group For geographical precisions see Annex.

The competent body informs the International Secretariat of the new Contact, and on possible terms of cooperation (e.g. a potential restriction to send only experienced volunteers, or only volunteers from member Branches of the Working Group in the Contact phase), and the International Secretariat makes sure that the new Contact is integrated into the SCI network as described above in paragraph 1.2.1., at the same time making aware the new Contact of SCI's Practical Procedures as well as of the Procedure how to become a Partner as described below in paragraph 1.3.2.

The International Secretariat informs the International Committee (ICM) about the newly recognised Contacts.

Before a new Contact can be recognised, the regional Working Group or the IEC have to follow a procedure that depends on the category of country where the Contact operates.

- a) Co-operation with a contact in a country where SCI does neither have a Branch or Group nor Partner or Contact: no further procedure to be followed. Exchange of volunteers can start immediately.
- b) Co-operation with a Contact in a country where SCI has one or more Partner(s) and / or Contact(s): The competent body (Working Group or IEC) informs the new Contact about the existing Partner(s) and / or Contact(s) in the country, and where this is considered possible invites for co-operation of the new Contact and the existing Partner(s) and / or Contact(s). The existing Partner(s) and / or Contact(s) in the respective country are also informed about the new Contact. Exchange of volunteers can start immediately.



- c) Co-operation with a Contact in a country with one or more SCI Branch(es) or Group(s): The IEC informs the respective Branch(es) and / or Group(s) about the new Contact and asks for their opinion. If one of the concerned Branch(es) or Group(s) has an objection (either to the exchange as such, or to its specific conditions), and no agreement can be found, the issue is discussed at the next ICM and the exchange is suspended until then. The next ICM decides whether to accept the new Contact and under which conditions. In any case, the new Contact and the Branch(es) and / or Group(s) already operating in the country are invited to come to a written agreement - including clear arbitrator clauses and evaluation procedures - about their mutual co- operation. The IEC or the regional Working Group may facilitate this process.

### 1.3.2. Evaluation of Contacts and Recognition of Partners

The cooperation with a contact is evaluated on a yearly basis. The competent body of recognition of the respective Contact (regional WG or IEC) is responsible for the evaluation. This task can be delegated to a Branch or Group, to specific activists, or to the International Secretariat. In any case, the evaluation should be carried out in a well-structured way (for example not based on only one or two volunteer reports). In the course of evaluation, the concerned Contact, SCI Branches and Groups as well as thematic Working Groups, the International Secretariat, and other interested actors should be consulted. The International Secretariat is informed about the results of the evaluation. The competent body also informs the Contact about the process and the results of the evaluation.

After two exchange seasons (normally two years of cooperation), the competent body discusses with the Contact the future perspective of co-operation and informs the ICM about the outcome of this discussion. However, in case of unsuccessful co-operation, the competent body may take a decision to cease co-operation at any time even before two exchange seasons are over. The evaluation is based on the Criteria for Partnership as explained above in paragraph 1.2.2. Regional Working Groups may also have their own criteria or guidelines for evaluation.

There are the following four options:

- a) Recommendation to the ICM to recognise the Contact as Partner of SCI.
- b) The Contact wants to become an SCI Group. In this case the Contact has to apply directly to the ICM, and the competent body as well as the IEC may give a recommendation.
- c) Ceasing of cooperation. In this case, no Branch or Group of SCI may exchange volunteers any more with the respective organisation for at least two years.
- d) No final decision. In this case, a Plan of Action how to come to a final decision has to be established. In the meantime, the respective organisation continues to keep



the Contact status. If five years after the recognition of the Contact no decision has been taken, the co-operation ceases. (see above, lit. c)

In any case, the decision is taken by the ICM. The ICM is free to take a decision in favour of any of the four above-mentioned options.

Once a Contact has been recognised Partner of SCI, it cannot be downgraded to Contact status again. However, the terms and conditions of the Partnership can be revised (see below, paragraph 1.3.3).

### **1.3.3. Evaluation of Partners and Review / Suspension / Ceasing of co-operation**

The co-operation with recognised Partners may be evaluated on a yearly basis or from time to time, according to the procedures of the respective regional Working Group.

Any Branch or Group of SCI can ask the competent body any time for the evaluation of a Partner. If the competent Working Group denies the necessity of such an evaluation, the respective Branch or Group may ask the IEC for a decision on the matter. In this case, the IEC may delegate the task of evaluation to a different body.

The competent body informs the Partner about the evaluation before it starts, and about its results.

In case of urgency, e.g. if further exchange would bring SCI into disrepute or its volunteers into danger, the competent body may decide to cease exchange immediately. The ICM has to ratify such a decision.

The evaluation of a Partner may lead to a recommendation to the ICM to change the terms of the co-operation in one of the following ways:

- a) Revision of the terms of cooperation.
- b) Suspension of cooperation. In this case, a Plan of Action has to be established. In the meantime, no exchange with the respective Partner may take place.
- c) Ceasing of cooperation. In this case, no Branch or Group of SCI may exchange volunteers any more with the respective organisation for at least two years.

In any case, the final decision is taken by the ICM. The ICM is free to take a decision in favour of any of the three above-mentioned options, or to continue cooperation as before.

After ceasing the co-operation with a Contact or Partner according to the procedure as outlined above under 1.3.2 c) or 1.3.3 c), co-operation may start again after a minimum of two years, following the procedure from the beginning as a new Contact organisation.