

plan:g - Partnership for Global Health is an Austrian development cooperation organisation working in the health sector. Throughout its work, plan:g follows a rights-based approach. In 1990, Austria was among the first signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>1</sup>.

As part of the Catholic Church, plan:g follows the regulations and procedures of Austrian Catholic Church concerning violence and abuse, issued June 7th, 2010 and revised in 2021<sup>2</sup>, as well as the Apostolic Letter Vos Estis Lux Mundi, issued moto proprio – that is without a formal request from any other party – on May 7th, 2019 by Pope Francis<sup>3</sup>.

Both our church's commitment and the UNCRC including the three optional protocols constitute the framework of the present plan:g Child Protection Policy.

Worldwide – i.e. both in Austria and in the partner countries of development cooperation – many children are subject to violence, abuse and ill-treatment. Serious violations of children's rights is a common phenomenon. plan:g stands against all forms of child abuse, which are defined in detail in Save the Children's Definition of Child Protection<sup>4</sup> and strives for the protection of all children (individuals under the age of 18 years) throughout its programmes and projects regardless of their gender, race, country of origin or religious belief and other features.

**In order to provide a practical guide to prevent child abuse occurring in plan:g-financed interventions, plan:g is committed to following these guiding principles:**

- We promote and protect the best interests of children – **always**
- We strengthen the rights of children with and without disabilities – **uncompromisingly**
- We engage in protecting children from sexual, emotional or physical abuse and exploitation, following a zero tolerance policy – **actively**
- We raise awareness and increase capacities concerning child rights, as child protection is a shared responsibility – **at plan:g, among our partners and within our extended network**

Furthermore, we are aware of the need for

- **Provision:** We provide services in our main area of concern, i.e. the health sector, knowing that combating poverty is a necessary condition for health sector advancement
- **Protection:** We engage in creating environments that are safe for children and vulnerable persons
- **Participation:** We engage in developing environments that empower children to participate in matters of their concern and in which their views are valued

We acknowledge the interests of children in our project planning and implementation activities and will take concrete steps to fulfil our respective obligations. Therefore, the plan:g Child Protection Policy applies to all stakeholders: the whole of plan:g (staff, board members) and all external service providers (volunteers or paid consultants). It governs our work with partner organisations and visitors (journalists, donors).

In programmes and projects, plan:g seeks to mainstream child protection measures (awareness raising, baseline assessments, cooperation, training, information exchange).

#### **Reporting of suspected cases:**

plan:g rarely works with children directly – but our partners do. Therefore, we ask our partners to have or to develop their own child protection policy. We regard a reporting system an essential part of such a policy.

However, as part of an escalating mechanism, it is always possible to contact plan:g directly in suspicion of a child is being abused or neglected. This ensures that unresolved problems can be promptly addressed. The reporting form is found on our homepage and will be sent to two different people within our organisation (four-eye principle), namely to Daniela Klocker and to Bernhard Emmerich. We assure you that all information will be treated confidentially and given priority.

plan:g can be trusted that child protection is our most important consideration when handling suspected cases. No plan:g team member has professional training in working with child abuse, if need be, we facilitate links to professionals (lawyers, psychologists, etc.). We do not necessarily involve national courts/jurisdiction if we have any doubts about justice being served. This is line with the aforementioned documents.

We do not intend to bypass the catholic church principle of subsidiarity that is dear to us: Wherever possible, social and political issues should be dealt with at the most immediate levels.

Compliance is ensured by staff and associated organisations or individuals being required to agree to this policy in writing.

All staff members/associated organisations will have access to child protection guidelines.

This policy will be monitored by periodical self-audits at least every 3 years and whenever if there is a relevant change in the area, we encourage partners to do the same.

---

Links to recourses for developing and monitoring child protection policies as well as this policy are provided on our homepage<sup>5</sup>.

**This Child Protection Policy Paper was approved by the board in May 2014 and last updated in August 2021.**

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ombudsstellen.at/dl/qNpuJKJKLMLMOJqx4kJK/FINAL\\_Rahmenordnung\\_Die\\_Wahrheit\\_wird\\_euch\\_freimachen\\_2021\\_pdf](https://www.ombudsstellen.at/dl/qNpuJKJKLMLMOJqx4kJK/FINAL_Rahmenordnung_Die_Wahrheit_wird_euch_freimachen_2021_pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/motu\\_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20190507\\_vos-estis-lux-mundi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20190507_vos-estis-lux-mundi.html)

<sup>4</sup> [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7586/pdf/sc\\_child\\_protection\\_definition\\_20071.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7586/pdf/sc_child_protection_definition_20071.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://plan-g.at/informieren/fuer-partner-for-partners>