



GLOBAL
CENTER ON
ADAPTATION

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Document owner: VP Finance & Operations

Document users: All GCA Staff & Related Parties

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Executive Summary

Purpose & Objectives	The purpose of this policy is to set out GCA's approach child protection and safeguarding. The aim of this Policy is to document GCA's position on child safeguarding as well as procedures for handling child safeguarding concerns and/or incidents.
Description & Scope	GCA acknowledges the importance of protecting children from harm and exploitation to promote their welfare and development. Although GCA does not work directly with children in its day-to-day activities, GCA acknowledges that child protection issues may arise in the pursuit of its mission and operations.
Applicability	All GCA Staff and Related Personnel
Effective Date	30 June 2025 Approved by the Executive Board & Supervisory Board, June 2025
Responsible Person	Vice President of Finance & Operations

1. Definitions & Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout this Policy and have the following meanings:

Child or Children	means a person under 18 years of age.
Child Abuse	means any form of actual or threatened violence, whether physical, mental or domestic violence, injury or abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, exploitation. This includes, without limitation, human trafficking, sexual abuse, gender-based violence (such as female genital mutilation or child marriage), bullying or corporal punishment.
Child Labor	means, in the context of local laws, child(ren) engaged in work that deprives them of their childhood, is harmful to their physical, social and mental development and/or interferes with their schooling in a material way.
Child Safeguarding	means Safeguarding the interests of Children to promote their welfare and protect them from Child Abuse and harm.
Consultants	refers to a type of Partner, usually an individual, who provides goods or services to GCA. If the Consultant is a company or organization, then this includes staff and personnel of the organization.
GCA	means the Global Center on Adaptation.
GCA Policy Framework	means the internal policies and procedures that govern GCA.
GCA Staff or Employees	means all personnel employed by GCA according to the terms of an employment contract, including interns.
Partners	means organizations that GCA partners with through an agreement (including, without limitation, goods or services, sub-grant, micro-grant) to implement certain programs and projects to achieve GCA's mission and objectives.
PSEAH	is the abbreviation for 'Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment'.
Related GCA Policies	means policies and procedures within the GCA Policy Framework, as implemented from time to time.

Related Personnel	means all persons engaged with GCA whether through a contract, as a stakeholder or other obligation/commitment – such as, Board members, volunteers, Consultants, Partners.
Safeguarding	means the measures GCA takes to prevent, report and respond to harm or abuse and to protect the health, well-being and human rights of anyone that comes into contact with GCA, whether through its Employees and Related Personnel, Partners, program participants and communities – as set out in its Safeguarding Policy (incl. as amended from time-to-time).

2. Policy Statement

GCA acknowledges the importance of protecting Children from harm and exploitation to promote their welfare and development and has zero-tolerance for any forms of Child Abuse or harm caused to Children. GCA recognises the international framework regarding the rights of Children. Although GCA does not work directly with Children, it recognizes its responsibility to ensure that no harm comes to Children as a result of its operations or through its programmatic work.

GCA Staff and Related Personnel may have **incidental or indirect contact** with Children through:

- Field visits, monitoring and evaluation activities, or community consultations
- Media collection, including photography
- Collaboration with local Partners
- Data collection or research projects

In this context, potential Child Safeguarding **risks may include**:

- Observing inappropriate or unlawful conduct towards Children, including Child Abuse or Child labor
- Failure to report observed or suspected abuse or neglect
- Use of children's images or personal information without guardian consent
- Partnering with Related Personnel who do not adhere to Safeguarding standards

This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with **Related GCA Policies on Safeguarding**, in particular:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Environmental & Social Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Whistleblower Policy](#)

3. Guiding Principles

GCA's approach to Child Safeguarding is underpinned by the principles stated in Related GCA Policies on Safeguarding.

GCA acknowledges and is guided by the following General Principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Respect and protect the rights of children in a **non-discriminatory** way;
- The **child's best interests** should be paramount in all matters affecting them;
- Children have a right to **life, survival and development**; and

- Children have a **right to be heard** on matters affecting them.¹

4. Policy Commitments

To mitigate potential Child Safeguarding risks, GCA commits to:

- **Policy Compliance:** Ensuring all GCA Staff and Related Parties adhere to and implement this Child Safeguarding Policy and Related GCA Policies on Safeguarding. GCA will make every effort to promote, create and maintain a safe organizational culture for all people who work for and with GCA in line with its Safeguarding Policies.
- **Partner Safeguarding Requirements:** Require Related Parties to have minimum Safeguarding policies and procedures in place, and have mechanisms in place whereby GCA can cease its engagement with Related Parties that are known to have committed Child Safeguarding offences or who pose an unacceptable risk. Through GCA's Partnership agreements, Partners and Related Parties are subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation through regular reporting requirements, and audit and investigation.
- **Embed Safeguarding in Programs:** as part of its programs due diligence processes, GCA undertakes Safeguarding risk assessments to identify SEAH and Child Abuse risks, and documents risk mitigation and minimization actions. Noting that the effects of climate change disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including Children, Safeguarding measures are incorporated into GCA programs and throughout project cycles for ongoing risk minimization and mitigation. Staff Training and awareness includes training programmatic Staff about how to identify and manage potential Child Safeguarding risks, such as Child Abuse and Child Labor, should they be encountered while on mission.
- **Recruitment & Selection:** GCA seeks to employ Staff who are aligned with its vision, mission and values and – in compliance with applicable laws – prevent known perpetrators of SEAH and Child Abuse from being hired or re-hired. GCAs Human Resources department ensure robust recruitment screening procedures for all Staff.
- **Data Protection:** Ensuring compliance with applicable data privacy laws as they relate to Children.
- **Confidentiality:** GCA will handle complaints and investigations sensitively and maintain confidentiality to ensure the privacy and protection of the Child(ren) is paramount, whilst ensuring the confidentiality of other persons involved in the investigation in accordance with applicable laws.
- **Training & Awareness:** Conduct ongoing training and awareness for GCA Staff on Child Safeguarding issues. GCA provides training and information to all Employees as part of their onboarding to the organization. GCA ensures that all Staff are informed, and reminded, about how to access Safeguarding information, support and how to file complaints or concerns.
- **Communications & Media:** Ensuring that the Child's best interests remain paramount, including advocacy for Children and Youth as they relate to GCA's mission, vision, objectives and programmatic work. GCA will take steps to ensure that it does not publish content that poses any Safeguarding risk to a Child or Children or without the express informed consent of a Child's parent or guardian. GCA acknowledges that Children may access its online resources and will ensure that its content or online activities that may involve a Child(ren) does not cause harm or give rise to Safeguarding risks.
- **Incident response:** GCA Staff and Related Personnel should report suspected or observed Child(ren) Safeguarding incidents through any one of the established pathways:
 - Notify a Line Manager, HR Manager, or any member of the Leadership Team

¹ UNICEF "General Principles" of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/#:~:text=Non%2Ddiscrimination%20\(Article%202\),to%20be%20heard%20\(Article%2012\)\)](https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/#:~:text=Non%2Ddiscrimination%20(Article%202),to%20be%20heard%20(Article%2012)))).

- Seek guidance from GCA's External Confidential Advisor
- Report using [GCA's Misconduct Reporting Mechanism](#) by:
 - Email or call GCA's **Safeguarding Focal Point** at safeguarding@gca.org or +31 643147051
 - Report using the **webform** on GCA's website: <https://gca.org/reportanincident/>

Incident reports will be handled according to the process and procedures set out in GCA's [Safeguarding Policy](#), including but not limited to: investigation in line with a 'survivor-centered' approach; providing appropriate support and assistance to the Child(ren); filing reports in a confidential incident management system; and taking prompt and appropriate action against Staff or Related Personnel found to have committed Child Abuse or other harm against a Child(ren) (such as administrative, disciplinary action and/or referral to police or relevant authorities).

5. Policy Implementation

GCA implements this Policy through **awareness** building, internal **communication** channels, staff **training** and onboarding, and through its **partnership requirements**.

GCA provides training and information to its Employees and Related Personnel, as part of their induction trainings on PSEAH and Safeguarding when they join GCA. This includes a briefing on GCA's policies and values, Code of Conduct, awareness training to help Employees and Related Personnel understand and identify Safeguarding risks, information about how to report concerns, and advice about where to seek further information about Safeguarding and safer practices across the organization.

GCA provides focused training to GCA Employee Managers, Leadership Team and Related Personnel focal points about receiving complaints, to ensure understanding of their obligations and how to discharge their duties should they receive a complaint.

This Policy will be reviewed every two years.

See also: [Safeguarding Policy](#)

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