

## Project Didi Australia Child Protection Policy

### **Project Didi Child Protection Statement**

Project Didi is committed to practices that transform and empower the lives of women and girls in Nepal, whose safety and wellbeing are paramount. Project Didi and its partners have a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation or abuse.

Project Didi understands it has a fundamental duty of care towards protecting the women and children engaged within its programs and activities. This Policy will be reviewed every two years (or earlier if required), and lessons learnt in the implementation of this Policy will be documented and reflected in future policies.

### **Scope of this Policy**

The policy applies to all Project Didi partners, administrators and volunteers.

All administrators, partners and volunteers are required to abide by the Code of Conduct as a condition of their involvement with Project Didi. This sets out specific expectations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Breaching or contravening the Child Protection Policy and/or Code of Conduct may lead to suspension and termination of any type of engagement. This will be determined on a case by case basis, and after a thorough consideration of the facts, we will decide whether the case needs to be reported to law enforcement authorities in full conformity with the law.

### **Project Didi Child Protection Principles**

**Principle 1:** Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse. Project Didi is committed to supporting women and girls in Nepal and will not overlook, support or condone any activity or practice that places women and girls at risk of exploitation or abuse.

**Principle 2:** Ensuring child protection. Project Didi works directly with partners and individuals in Nepal and supports them in their work to end the exploitation and abuse of children. We also work with Australian school students and design our programs to ensure their protection.

**Principle 3:** Everyone is responsible for child protection. This policy is mandatory for all those who work for or on behalf of Project Didi, including representatives, partners and volunteers.

**Principle 4:** We work in an open, transparent and collaborative way, with partners and those exposed to trafficking and abuse. All reports of concern regarding the safety and protection of a child will be taken seriously. We recognise that situations of abuse and harm can occur when staff, volunteers, partners, children, families and community members do not feel able to raise their concerns.

**Principle 5:** Recognition of the best interests of the child. Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Project Didi is committed to upholding the rights of the child and Australia's obligations under this convention. In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

## **Code of Conduct Policy**

In line with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 'DFAT Child Protection Policy' (March 2017), all Project Didi representatives, partners and volunteers that work with, or have contact with children, are expected to adhere to the following behaviours while they are performing those duties:

- Treat all children with respect.
- Do not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Do not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse, or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services.
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working with children.
- Do not invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Do not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensure that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children).
- Do not use computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium.
- Do not use physical punishment on children.
- Do not hire children for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy noncompliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during association with Project Didi or its partners.
- Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.
- Gain permission from Project Didi representative and their partner organisation before photographing, filming or publishing photographs or film.
- It is Project Didi's policy to not take, use or publish photos that identify children under 18.
- When photographing or filming an adult or an unidentified child or using an image for any related purposes:
  - Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming.
  - Obtain informed consent from any adult before photographing or filming. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided.
  - Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present subjects in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should not be identified and must 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, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about the subject when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

**Raising concerns about a Child's safety:**

All reports of concern regarding the safety and protection of a child will be taken seriously. Any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child should be raised immediately with Project Didi representative or the partner organisation staff.

**Working with Children Check**

All representatives, partners and volunteers are required to satisfy a Working with Children Check.

**Criminal Record Check**

As required, all administrators, partners and volunteers may be required to satisfy a Criminal Record Check.

**Adapted from:**

- [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Policy](#)
- [Terres des hommes Child Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Scope Global Child Protection Policy](#)