

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES<sup>1</sup>

This document outlines the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures applying for the full duration of the following event, including any preparatory or follow-up meetings:

**Name of the event:** *Justice that Works: Leveraging Cooperation and Technology for Children, Disability Rights and Gender Equity* (hereinafter referred to as: *International Conference*)

**Organizers:** Validity Foundation, Hungarian NGO Child Rights Coalition, ELTE Law School

**Place of the event:** Online and in person at ELTE Law School (Egyetem tér, 1-3, 1053, Budapest)

**Date(s) of the event:** 20-21 November 2024

### I. PURPOSE

This Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures was developed to

- prevent any form of violence or harm to children present at the event and to prevent and
- take appropriate action to any child safeguarding suspicions, cases, or concerns that may emerge in relation to the event, i.e. before, during and after the child's participation in the event.

Safeguarding children requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of respect, integrity and accountability. The Organizing Committee of the *International Conference* and, where applicable, the partner organisations, institutions and/or hosts of the event, are committed to encouraging and maintaining

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<sup>1</sup> Present child safeguarding policy and code of conduct was inspired by the following documents: [CoE Child Safeguarding Protocol](#), [UNICEF Hungary's Child Safeguarding Policy](#), [Child Safeguarding Policy of the Child-led Global Campus on Human Rights International Conference 2022 on Mental Health](#), [Child Safeguarding Policy of the Special Representative of the UN Sec. Gen. for Violence against children](#)

a culture of mutual respect, and an attitude where people feel able to raise any safeguarding concern being confident that it will be taken seriously and followed-up in an appropriate way and, where applicable, reported in accordance with national law.

## II. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This document applies to every person involved in the organization of the *International Conference* and attending the event (as participant, speaker, moderator, translator, catering provider etc.), including any preparatory or follow-up meetings.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone involved in the organization of the *International Conference*, in whatever capacity, should acknowledge their responsibility to respect and safeguard the rights and wellbeing of participating children, as well as their responsibility to take or support appropriate steps to implement these principles and procedures.

All activities related to the organization of the *International Conference* are included under the scope of this document.

These activities include but are not limited to:

- meetings, consultations, campaigns or events related to the *International Conference* in whatever format or location
- the preparation of the *International Conference*'s publications and communications material
- gathering images or videos of children, audio recordings, written submissions or other personal information in relation to the *International Conference*
- online or in-person communications with children.

A **child** is defined as a person below the age of 18 years.

A **child safeguarding concern** is any situation or behaviour that places a child at risk or that has the potential to harm a child, whether online or in person. This can include physical, sexual or emotional violence/abuse, neglect, or exploitation.<sup>2</sup>

Violence, abuse, harm and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. There are several forms of **violence against children**, such as: neglect or negligent treatment, mental violence, physical violence, corporal punishment, sexual abuse and exploitation, violence among children, self-harm, harmful practices, violence in the mass media, violence through information and communications technologies.

### III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Organizing Committee and everyone attending the event (as participant, speaker, moderator, translator, catering provider etc.) are bound by national law and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ensuring that they:

- act in the best interests of children
- respect the dignity of all children and ensure that expressions or representations that discriminate against, victimise, intimidate, ridicule or degrade a child or children or groups of persons must never be used. Where images of a child or children are used, they should represent the child in a dignified, respectful and empowering manner.
- do no harm to children
- avoid all forms of discrimination
- adopt an inclusive approach that is sensitive to the situation of more vulnerable or marginalized children

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of different forms of violence, see the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General comment No. 13 (2011): The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence (CRC/C/GC/13)

- ensure children the right to say no by making sure that the child understands his or her right to interrupt, withdraw or stop their participation at any time without the need to provide a justification
- respect children’s privacy and personal information and ensure that any information or image that could be used to identify a child or put the child at risk is not used or shared. In any reporting and communication about the event, personal data, information and images of the participating children can only be gathered, used and shared with the informed consent of the child and the child’s parent or guardian, in accordance with national law, and other applicable regulations.
- respect the evolving capacity and agency of children
- respects children’s right to be heard and their right to freedom of expression
- work in partnership with others to keep children safe
- ensure that children receive child friendly information adapted to the child’s age, maturity, language, gender and culture.

#### IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every participant at the *International Conference* has an active role to play in creating a safe and empowering environment for all children.

**Everyone attending** the *International Conference* shall:

- read and comply with this Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the Code of Conduct (see Annex 1)
- refer any child safeguarding concerns in relation to children arising at the conference to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point (or alternate).

**The Child Safeguarding Focal Point** or alternate shall:

- follow up on the referred child safeguarding concerns by consulting with the child safeguarding team<sup>3</sup> and take appropriate action as needed.

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<sup>3</sup> 3 child safeguarding experts designated by the Organizing Committee.

## V. PREVENTING HARM AND MITIGATING RISK

### 1. Activities involving children

When planning children’s participation at the conference, preparatory meetings – both online and offline – and children’s contributions to the publications and communication materials of the conference, the Organizing Committee shall consider:

- the nature of the information accessed or gathered, including personal information, photos, videos, text and audio recordings
- whether participation in the activity may have harmful consequences or lead to intimidation, reprisals, or the fear of such
- whether some children may face additional vulnerabilities and require specific measures to ensure their safe participation in the activity.

The Organizers shall create a safe environment for children’s involvement during the *International Conference* by mitigating any specific risks identified, and by ensuring the following:

- Children’s contributions, images and other personal information shall be presumed to be confidential unless the Organizing Committee has received written consent for the use of such material or information as part of its activities (see Annex 3 for a template consent form).
- Media representatives and other visitors to the event should be accompanied by the Child Safeguarding Focal Point (or alternate) or an appropriate delegate when having contact with a participating child and should not be left unattended in the presence of the children. All requests for interviews with children or media reporting on children participating in the event have to be submitted to the organisers of the event and the Child Safeguarding Focal Point or alternate. Authorisation for interviews with children must only be granted where in compliance with the rights and the best interests of the child and with the prior informed consent of the child and the child’s parent or guardian.

- Any communication and reporting about the involvement of children in the event, including the portrayal of children in this context, should be based on facts and should present empathic and respectful language. Reporting and imaging children participating in an event must not be manipulated or sensationalised in any way. Communications should avoid making generalisations, which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation and pictures should not be taken and used out of context.
- The Organizers shall refrain from sharing children’s personally identifiable information, such as their full name, postal address, name of their school, email address, phone number and details for their social media accounts.
- The Organizers shall not undertake any activities or produce any written, visual or audio content that exploits children, stigmatizes them or exposes them to harm.
- At the *International Conference* where child participation is foreseen, the Organizers will remind all participants of the need to respect children’s privacy and protect them from harm, for example in relation to other parties taking photographs or sharing details of the event on social media.
- During online events that involve children, the Organizers shall consider the use of technical tools and methods of interaction to keep children safe, including:
  - o using the event registration function to identify participants under the age of 18
  - o sharing safeguarding information and the Code of Conduct before the event and reminding participants of the main points at the start of the event
  - o inviting children to display their first names only on the online platform
  - o reminding children not to share any personally identifiable information
  - o disabling the chat function and/or video for participants under the age of 18
  - o filtering questions through a moderator.

## **2. Interacting with children**

The Organizers shall provide comprehensive information to children on their involvement at the conference (including through preparatory meetings, where appropriate).

This information shall include:

- the purpose of the activity
- how the activity will work, particularly if the event is public, filmed, webcast, photographed or recorded for further dissemination
- how children’s inputs will be used, and particularly the implications of sharing images, audio, text and other material online
- details of who will be in the audience or otherwise participating in the event
- how the Organizers will follow up and provide feedback on the outputs and impact of the activity.

The Organizers shall **inform children, parents/legal guardians** and/or the organization facilitating the participation of children in the activity about:

- the child’s right to be protected from harm while participating in the activity
- how the Organizers and all participants at the *International Conference* should interact with children, in line with present Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
- how children can keep themselves and others safe during the activity
- where and how children can seek support if the content of the activity may be triggering or upsetting, including through local referral or support mechanisms (e.g. helplines)
- where and how children can report their child safeguarding concerns, including the name and contact details of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point of alternate.

## **VI. RESPONDING TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS**

### **1. Referral to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point and immediate follow-up**

Staff members, participants, translators, volunteers, children and any other persons present at or attending the *International Conference* may have a child safeguarding concern as a result of:

- a child's disclosure of violence, abuse or exploitation
- their own observations on interacting with a child
- information or material shared by another party, including other children.

Concerns about suspected, potential or witnessed **child safeguarding incidents** including incidents of violence and/or abuse, either physical, sexual, emotional, bullying or neglect **should be reported to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point** or alternate **immediately**, without putting the child at any further danger and avoiding the risk of reiteration.

The reporting person should make a careful note of all relevant details but it is not his/her role to investigate a child safeguarding concern or to probe for additional information.

Where someone receives a **disclosure directly from a child**, it is important to reassure the child that they have done the right thing in sharing the information and that abuse is never their fault. The contacted person should indicate that (s)he will need to share the information with the Child Safeguarding Focal Point or alternate who will be able to help. It is important that (s)he never promises a child that (s)he will keep their disclosure secret. In addition, s(h)e should not raise unrealistic expectations about what the Child Safeguarding Focal Point and Child Safeguarding Team<sup>4</sup> can do.

The Child Safeguarding Focal Point or alternate will then bring the matter immediately to the attention of the Child Safeguarding Team with a recommendation for action.

The recommendation will consider:

- any immediate or imminent threat of harm to the child

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<sup>4</sup> Composed of 3 child safeguarding experts designated by the Organizers' Committee.

- the need to inform the child’s parents/legal guardians and connect them to support services, where it is safe to do so
- the need to inform another organization if the concern relates to an accompanying adult, staff member or non-staff personnel of that organization
- whether referral to national law enforcement or child protection authorities would be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

The Child Safeguarding Focal Point ensures that there is always a feedback provided for the person who has reported a child safeguarding concern on the follow up of his/her report.

## ANNEX 1 CODE OF CONDUCT

All delegates, staff, partners, children and others attending the Conference must respect and abide by these ‘rules for behaviour’:

All organizers, staff, delegates, translators and every other person attending or contributing to the organization of the Conference have a role to play in keeping children safe.

In agreeing to abide by this Code of Conduct, you are committing to the following.

### **I will:**

- act in line with present child safeguarding policy and procedures
- respect the rights, privacy and dignity of children
- respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, without making any prejudicial assumptions about them
- be aware of and demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- respect the evolving capacity, views and agency of children
- value and take children’s contributions seriously, actively involving them in the planning of activities wherever possible
- communicate with children in a way that is sensitive to their age, gender, communication needs and background
- ensure that when preparing an activity with children, they understand the goal of the activity, what to expect, how their input will be used and how the organizers will follow up and provide feedback
- ensure that the Organizing Committee has obtained the full, informed consent of children and their parents/caregivers for participation at the *International Conference*.
- give my full attention to the children I am working with and respect their choices about how they wish to contribute

- challenge unacceptable behaviour and respond to any child safeguarding concerns promptly, in line with present child safeguarding policy and procedures
  - strive to be visible to others when they come into contact with children and adhere to the “Two Adult Rule”
  - be aware that as an adult working with children and young people, I am in a position of trust, so they always maintain appropriate boundaries
  - promptly share any suspicions or allegations with the child safeguarding focal point regarding behaviors that conflict with the Child Safeguarding Policy or the Code of Conduct, including any form of child abuse.
  - treat information related to child safeguarding reporting confidentially.
  - refrain from investigating child safeguarding reports, which means I do not conduct clarifying conversations with the alleged perpetrator and do not ask clarifying questions to the alleged victim, but instead promptly share all suspicions with the child safeguarding focal point.
    - handle information related to children and young people confidentially.
    - seek the consent of the child and their legal representative for any joint activities or programs.
    - request the consent of the child and their parents/guardians before making any audio recordings or photos, or using the child's image or story. This includes explaining to the children and their legal representatives how the photographs and provided information will be used.
  - when using the personal story of the child or their family, I will pay special attention to ensure that even without a name, the child or their relative cannot be identified.

**I will not:**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children;

- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight in their home;
- Do things for children of an intimate nature that they can do for themselves;
- Permit or participate in behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

*Note:* This is not an exhaustive list. The principle is that Organizers and everyone involved in and attending the event should avoid actions or behaviour that may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour vis-à-vis children.

- Consent Form for Child Participant -  
EVENT: Justice that Works Conference

Date : 20/11/2024

Where : Budapest

Please kindly send this consent form back to Aysegul Oz at aysegul@validity.ngo by 20/11/2024.

Find out more about the conference taking place here: <https://validity.ngo/2024/11/07/justice-that-works-conference/>

### **Consent of Child Participant**

Name of the event:

Date of the event:

Location of the event:

Your full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

The full name of a parent/legal guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Their relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick if you agree:

### **Participation and safeguarding**

I have been given background information about the activity, I understand what the activity is about, what will happen and my role during the event.

I understand that if I wish to, I can contact the organisers throughout the activity to discuss with them anything related to it.

I understand that participation in this activity is on voluntary basis and that I can stop my involvement in the event without any needed justification and at any time.

I understand that if I desire, I can have an accompanying adult to support me in my participation.

I understand that the priority of the event is to keep children safe and that if I have any concerns about my or another child's safety, I can speak to an adult I trust or I can contact the Child Safeguarding Focal Point for the activity.

I understand that a Child Participation and Safeguarding Policy applies during the conference.

### **Privacy and communications**

If you say no for any of the questions below it will not risk your participation in the activity. We will take steps, within our ability, to make sure that no one takes a picture or video of you and none of your image or recording is used by anyone.

Are you comfortable that your first name, country of origin and age is shared with all participants?

YES  NO

Do you agree that the organisers take pictures, audio or video recording of you during the conference?

YES  NO

Do you agree that any image, audio or video segment of you made during the conference can be used by the organiser:

- in newspapers, books, reports and leaflets?  YES  NO

- on electronic media, including social media and on the internet?  YES  NO

I understand that the organisers may take note of and use some of the information, statements or other contributions made by me without mentioning my name or any other information that would allow people to recognise me. The purpose to use this information can be to inform public reports or communications about the conference, and to promote the work of the organisations on their website and/or social media.

I understand that any data or personal information held about me will only be available to the organisers and held on password protected computers. After the project, only my first name and contact detail will be kept on record, which will be destroyed five years after the project is closed.

Date and location:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the child:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of a parent/guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of a supporting organisation (if possible):

\_\_\_\_\_

*\*The chaperone/legal guardian/supporting organization may be the same person.*

**Annex 1: WE WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU FEEL WELCOME AND COMFORTABLE TO TAKE PART**

Do you have any allergies we should know about?

Yes  No

Details:

Do you have any additional support needs you'd like us to know about (physical or learning disability, mental health issues, low confidence, difficulties with communication, things you find it hard to talk about)?

Yes  No

Details:

Is there anything extra we can do to make sure that you can come along and participate fully?

Yes  No

Details:

Are you taking any medication we should know about?

Yes  No

Details:

Do you have any dietary requirements?

Yes  No

Details:

If you practice a religion, please tell us if there's anything connected to taking part in the event that we should know about

Details:

**Annex 2: IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY**

**Contact persons in case of EMERGENCY. It is very important you fill in this section fully**

**Name 1:**

Relationship to you:

Phone number:

Mobile:

**Name 2:**

Relationship to you:

Phone number:

Mobile:

Details:

In the event of emergency, do you agree that you can receive hospital or dental treatment, including an anaesthetic?

Yes  No

**My Consent**

Signature:

Location (where you live):

Today's date:

**Parent/Legal Guardian Consent (if under 18)**

This child/young person under 18:

is allowed to participate in .....(event)

is allowed to take part in media activities at ..... (event)

has been informed about the ..... (event) goals, the voluntary nature of participation and anonymity in an age-appropriate way

has been informed that they can refuse to participate at any time with no consequences

is allowed to receive appropriate medical attention from a registered practitioner if at any time my child requires urgent medical attention,

Full name:

Relationship to child/young person:

Location:

Date: