



Qendra për  
Administrim Social  
Ekonomik Territorial

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**  
**FEB 2025 – DEC 2027**

**Qendra per Administrim Social Ekonomik  
Territorial**

**ASET Center**

## Index

1. Introduction .....	
2. Purpose of the Policy .....	
3. Mission .....	
4. Terms and Definitions .....	
5. Principles and Regulatory References .....	
6. Policy Statement .....	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

ASET has developed its Child Protection Policy to reaffirm its unwavering commitment to ensuring that all children who engage with our organization are safe, respected, and protected from all forms of harm. This policy reflects ASET's dedication to upholding the rights of children and adolescents in all initiatives we support or implement, in accordance with international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are serious violations of a child's rights and are often rooted in deep power imbalances, exacerbated by social, gender, and age-based inequalities. These risks are particularly pronounced in development and humanitarian contexts, where individuals working for or on behalf of organizations may control access to valued resources and services.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

Through this policy, ASET aims not only to implement robust protective measures but also to promote a broader cultural shift. Preventing abuse is not just about having protocols and procedures—it requires leadership, accountability, and a shared organizational commitment to change. We strive to create an environment where the voices of children and adolescents are heard, their dignity is respected, and their safety is at the center of every decision. This policy applies to all ASET personnel, including staff, volunteers, consultants, and partners, whether working on a paid or voluntary basis. It outlines the principles, responsibilities, and procedures necessary to handle any concerns regarding children's safety; and the organization itself, along with its partners, by reducing their vulnerability to unfounded accusations.

As part of ASET Center's activities, it is essential to clearly identify and address potential risks related to contact and engagement with children. The Child Protection Policy establishes that every activity — whether in the field or online — must be conducted in a safe environment that respects children's dignity and rights. The organization acknowledges the potential risks that may arise from the public exposure of children and upholds the principle that communication and representation of children on social media and public materials must be carried out with particular care.

In this context, ASET Center sets clear rules: the publication of photographs, videos, personal stories, or identifying information about children requires prior informed and documented consent from the legal guardian and, where possible, from the child themselves. The use of visual materials must respect dignity, privacy, and avoid any potential risk of misuse, exploitation, or stigmatization of the child.

Furthermore, the organization strictly prohibits posts that portray children in vulnerable, shameful, or potentially inappropriate situations as perceived by the general public. Communications on ASET Center's social media and online platforms must promote a positive and protective image of children, highlighting their achievements, potential, and rights without reducing them to "victim stories" or unnecessary "public exposure."



Protecting children through communication is a shared responsibility among all staff, volunteers, partners, and collaborators of the organization, and any violation of these principles is treated with utmost seriousness to safeguard the safety and integrity of the children we support.

### **3. MISSION**

Our mission is to help make society better by creating plans and projects that help our communities. We are leaders in making and using social policies, and we work hard to help different groups of people. We want to support growth that keeps our country's culture and nature safe. We protect children's rights, make healthcare better, and give people chances to learn work skills. These actions help build a fair future where everyone has equal chances. We also help rural areas grow and support good tourism practices, including MICE tourism. This creates lasting positive changes that make communities stronger, help people live better lives, and create more jobs and opportunities. Everything we do aims to make life better for our citizens.

ASET Center Commits to:

- Valuing, listening and respecting all children and young people;
- Ensuring that all staff and people directly associated with our work understand their personal responsibility to prevent harm and report any form of child abuse and sexual exploitation of children;
- Diligently implement our child safeguarding system by applying relevant policies, procedures, training and other learning opportunities across ASET Center and with our partners and relevant third parties;
- Ensuring that the organization creates the right culture and a safe and trusted environment for anyone to report child incidents and/or concerns verbally or in writing and through child friendly and accessible mechanisms;

### **4. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

#### **Maltreatment and Abuse of Children**

ASET Center takes as its primary reference the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, complemented by a series of policies related to the ISPCAN network (International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) for the international dimension, and Law No 18/2017 "For the rights and protection of the Child. Regarding the classification of the phenomenon of child abuse and maltreatment, ASET Center adopts the international and national definitions as outlined by the World Perspective (WHO/ISPCAN).

#### **Child**

The term "child" refers to both boys and girls, as well as adolescents of both genders; therefore, the general procedure concerns the protection of all minors up to the age of 18.

#### **Child Abuse**

The term "abuse" refers to any form of physical and/or psychological maltreatment, sexual abuse, abandonment or neglect, or the commercial or other exploitation of a child, which causes or may cause harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity, and occurs within a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse of a child is caused (or may be caused) by an action (or omission) committed by someone in a position of responsibility, power, or trust over the child—such as a parent or equivalent figure—and results in harm.

### **Psychological Abuse**

Psychological abuse arises from the inability to provide an environment supportive of the child's development, including the presence of a caring figure who enables the child to fully and constructively express emotions and relationships, appropriate to their personal potential within their social context. This also includes behaviors toward the child that may cause or have a high likelihood of causing harm to their psychological, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Such actions are typically attributable to a person in a position of responsibility, trust, or power. These actions include: restrictions on freedom of movement; degrading, demeaning, persecutory, threatening, frightening, discriminatory, or ridiculing behavior; or other forms of hostile verbal attitudes or rejection.

### **Neglect**

Neglect refers to the failure to support a child's development across all areas: health, education, emotional wellbeing, growth, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions—relative to the resources available to the family or responsible individuals. This failure causes or may cause harm to the child's psychological, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Neglect also includes failure to adequately supervise and protect the child from violence whenever possible.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves engaging a child in sexual activities that they cannot fully comprehend, are not developmentally prepared for, or cannot consent to—even in the absence of laws explicitly prohibiting such behavior. Sexual abuse consists of a sexual relationship between a child and an adult or another child who, by virtue of age or development, is in a position of responsibility, trust, or power. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to: Inducing or coercing a child to engage in illegal sexual activities, Exploiting a child in prostitution or other illegal sexual practices, Exploiting a child in pornographic activities.

### **Exploitation**

Commercial or other forms of exploitation occur when a child is used for activities that benefit others. This includes—but is not limited to—child labor and child prostitution. These activities harm the child's physical, psychological, educational, spiritual, moral, and socio-emotional



development.

## 5. PRINCIPLES AND REGULATORY REFERENCES

The **ASET Center Policy** is based on the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent**, on its four founding principles — non-discrimination (Art. 2), the best interests of the child (Art. 3), the right to life, survival and development (Art. 6), and participation (Art. 12) - as well as on the Optional Protocols to the Convention. This Policy also refers to the following documents:

- the **ASET Center Code of Ethics**, which outlines the organization's mission and values;
- **Keeping Children Safe**, International Child Safeguarding Standards;
- **Core Humanitarian Standards**, together with the **Child Protection Minimum Standards**;
- all **United Nations conventions and declarations** relating to children;
- the **European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights**;
- the **Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse** (known as the **Lanzarote Convention**, April 25, 2007);
- **Albanian national legislation** concerning child protection;
- the **European Regulation on the Protection of Personal Data** (EU) 2016/679 ("GDPR").

## 6. POLICY STATEMENT

Humanitarian workers and other representatives of NGOs such as ASET CENTER are placed in a position of special trust by the populations they serve. When that trust is exploited and standards for safeguarding children fail, immense damage is caused with long-term effects on the lives of children and their families, and implications for the credibility and reputation of the organisations involved.

ASET Center has zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and sexual exploitation of children by our staff, volunteers, our partners' staff and those who represent us.

ASET Center Child Protection system is made up of **four key areas**:

### **Awareness, Prevention, Reporting and Response.**

Each of these areas has activities that continue throughout the life cycle of our development, humanitarian and advocacy work in the countries we operate in either directly or through partners. We adopt a child-centred approach to child safeguarding.

### ➤ **Implementation and Review**

- ASET Center's Child Protection Policy will have a review every three years. The Director regularly reviews and updates this Policy at least every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.
- ASET Center's Child Protection Policy and procedures together with the ASET Center Code of Conduct covers all aspects of our operations

➤ **Awareness**

ASET Center will ensure the Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and reporting procedures and mechanisms are made widely available, accessible and publicised to children, their carers, all staff, partnerstaff, volunteers and all relevant third parties and stakeholders and in language and format they understand. All visitors to ASET Center or offices who will have contact with children will be made aware of the ASET Center Child Protection Policy, relevant procedures and Code of Conduct and the behaviour and conduct expected of them.

➤ **Personal Responsibility**

This Policy applies to:

- members of the Board of Directors;
- ASET Center staff, employed under any type of contract, volunteers, interns, and trainees;
- donors, journalists, ambassadors, and in general all those who come into direct contact with ASET Center projects and initiatives;
- staff and representatives of partner organizations, as well as any other individual, group, or organization that has formal/contractual relations with ASET Center involving direct contact with children or adolescents.

ASET Center staff, partner organization staff, and their representatives must act in accordance with this Policy, both in their professional and private lives. They must do all that they can to prevent, report (within 24hours) and respond immediately to any child safeguarding concerns.

'Unacceptable behavior and conduct' refers to committing any acts of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child and putting them at risk of deliberate or unintentional harm; non-compliance with policies and procedures and failing to take appropriate action to prevent or report any violations and poor safeguarding practice.

➤ **Recruitment and Induction Training of Staff**

The hiring and selection of staff and other collaborators must reflect ASET Center's commitment to the protection of children and adolescents, ensuring that communications, checks, and procedures are consistent with this commitment. Selected candidates are informed of the binding nature of this Policy, the related procedures, and the Code of Ethics, and that these apply to both their professional and private lives.

*The initial selection process* is structured around an introductory interview, following an evaluation of the curriculum vitae and qualifications, and after the checking of three references indicated by the candidate in the CV and any cover letters and/or initial selection procedures.



The introductory interview is always conducted by a senior figure of ASET Center and is aimed at assessing skills, experience, references, and attitude, as well as ensuring alignment with ASET Center's core principles. *In the first phase*, the selected candidate will work alongside experienced collaborators for an agreed period and will be placed in environments where their approach, competence, and compliance with professional and ethical standards can be evaluated. After this mentoring/accompaniment phase, the selected candidate will be included in ASET Center's *training programs* and subsequently (or simultaneously) integrated into the organization's workforce.

All staff, volunteers and interns are required to complete mandatory Child Safeguarding training within designated time period from joining the organization and attendance is recorded. All staff are required to attend refresher Child Protection Policy training at least once every three years. The constant promotion of capacity building and the team context serve as strong safeguards for the organization, its users, and its collaborators

ASET Center staff receive ongoing and timely training on technical topics related to children's rights and on Policy themes. ASET Center promotes specialized training on issues of abuse and mistreatment, aligned with the types of projects and initiatives carried out, both internally and externally. It also works to raise awareness on the Policy's topics at local, regional, national, EU, and international levels.

#### ➤ **Internal Risk Analysis for all programmes, projects etc**

No program project proposal will be approved until a thorough safeguarding risk assessment has taken place which will include:

**Step 1:** Identifying the level of contact with children, and the unique risks associated with the target group of children (e.g. age, gender, disability, ethnicity, prior trauma or adverse childhood experiences)

**Step2:** Identifying the risks to children inherent in the thematic areas of work, approaches, operational procedures and systems and delivery' of activities;

**Step3.** Assessing the individual program, project or organisation's focus on children;

**Step4:** Assessing the strength of safeguarding systems already in place, including appropriate training and application and embedding of relevant policies and procedures;

**Step5:** Assessing the potential risk posed by the individual program / project or organisation, identifying mitigating factors as the result of Steps 3 and 4:

**Step6:** Establishment of the overall contextual safeguarding risk and a decision to proceed or not;

**Step7:** Resource Plan and agreements to mitigate and manage risks;

**Step8:** Monitoring of any action plan and/or agreement in place within the programme, project or partner.

#### ➤ **Reporting and Response**



- All projects and interventions commit to informing children about their rights and protecting them from potentially critical situations;
- All projects and interventions support and promote a culture of non-violence in every form and manifestation, defining violence as unacceptable under all circumstances;
- Children are properly equipped and empowered to be the main actors in the protection, disclosure, and reporting processes;
- All procedures that directly involve children are drafted using simple and understandable language;
- Every ASET Center staff member is committed to presenting themselves as a trusted adult and acting accordingly;

***The reporting of suspected abuse must be directed to the General Director, who has been appointed as the Child Protection Officer by a specific provision***

***The ASET CENTER Board of Directors is responsible for managing reports and the necessary follow-up actions, informing the competent authorities***

- ASET Center is committed to a robust, confidential reporting and investigation involving the right internal or external professionals
- All staff, partner staff, implementing partner staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers are mandated to report any suspected child safeguarding incidents or concerns directly to the Executive Director; and Child safeguarding concerns involving criminal conduct reported to the relevant statutory authority unless to do so would place the child at additional risk of harm or there is another justifiable risk in reporting
- There is no threshold for reporting a child safeguarding concern as described in this policy. Any concern, however minor, must be reported.
- All suspected or actual incidents are to be reported as a matter of urgency and always within 24hours of a person becoming aware of the incident;

***A report — whether direct or supporting other organizations/clients according to specific competence — must be filed in the following situations:***

- Detection and assessment of any abuse, whether suspected or confirmed;
- When an employee witnesses and/or suspects a potential situation of harm;
- When an employee receives a report from external partners or collaborators;
- When an employee directly or indirectly receives a direct testimony or story from a child.

The Director regularly monitors and updates this Policy at least every three years, or sooner if necessary.



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**APPROVED  
FEBRUARY 2025**

**MS. AULONA HOXHA**

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
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