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Child Safeguarding Guidance for Journalists

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Introduction

Children on the move are children who have left home. They are on the way to a new destination, or have already reached it. They are accompanied or alone. They are nomads, asylum-seekers, refugees or in street situation. They have left home to escape poverty, violence or disaster.

Among these children are those who have been sent away by force by their parents, those who have been kidnapped or trafficked and who frequently end up exploited and abused.

33 million of them have migrated abroad and millions of others within their own country. In the coming years the number of children and youth on the move is going to rise.

Children have the right to move but by doing so their rights are often violated. The public opinion tends to perceive them as a threat. They are frequently subject to neglect, prosecution or unsafe return. Children on the move rarely have access to basic services guaranteeing the fulfilment of their fundamental rights, such as schooling, social services, healthcare, sanitation, recreation centres, psychosocial support. Moreover, millions of them are put in detention because of their migrant status. Their needs and interests are largely absent from the preoccupation of public authorities and their voices remain unheard.

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, governments are obliged to protect all children, including children on the move. In order for these children to find an alternative based on their best interest, they need to be listened to.

The Committee of the Rights of the Child states that children on the move are among the marginalised and disadvantaged children whom are less likely to have their views heard and taken into account by authorities and policy makers. Some are given the opportunity to express their views at various international conferences, however it remains true that they are often taken lightly. A human rights approach to children on the move makes it a high priority to find out what these views are and to take them into account1.

« Listen to me » is the motto of the currently running Destination Unknown International Campaign to protect children on the move2. Media have the power to listen and report, to give these children a voice and convey their message.

1  What can you do to protect children on the move?, Mike Dottridge, Published 2012 by the Terre des Hommes International Federation.
2  Destination Unknown is an international campaign to protect children on the move led by Terre des Hommes International Federation, its member organisations and partners (more on page 27)

“ALL CHILDREN, WHOEVER THEY ARE AND WHEREVER THEY ARE, HAVE A RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED. THIS GUIDANCE FOR JOURNALISTS HAS BEEN PRODUCED TO ENSURE THEY ARE DOING ALL THEY CAN TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE.”
Section one

Key principles
Provisions

The Destination Unknown partners\(^3\), hereafter referred as “partner organisations”, consider child abuse unacceptable in all circumstances and are committed to ensure that all possible and necessary steps are taken to protect the rights of children and to ensure their well being. In accordance with the United National Convention on the Rights of a Child (1989) a ‘child’ is defined as a person below the age of 18.

It is the responsibility of all staff and associates, including journalists (for the purpose of this guide. ‘journalists’ refers to written, film and photo), to protect children from all forms of harm. In general terms, this means ensuring high standards of personal conduct as well as being vigilant about the conduct of others towards children – this could mean conduct of other staff and associates, or other people not connected to Terre des Hommes or its partners, e.g. family members, adults or other children in the community.

Should you develop any concerns regarding possible or actual harm to children, you are duty-bound to report these in line with local reporting procedures (see section on reporting below).

Partner organisations uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the following five principles:

I. Rights of the child
Anyone working for or with a partner organisation must respect and promote the Rights of the Child. In particular, he/she must protect the right of every beneficiary to live in safety, free from the risk of abuse or exploitation. All staff must always act in the best interests of the child.

II. Zero tolerance
Partner organisations will not tolerate any form of ill treatment of its programme beneficiaries, especially children, by those working for or with it, and will take whatever steps may be necessary in the case of a failure to abide by the child safeguarding policy.

III. Risk management
Partner organisations ensure that any risks of ill treatment or harm to which children may be exposed are identified and minimised, right from the planning stage of its activities through to their implementation.

IV. Responsibility of everyone
Successful implementation of the child safeguarding policy depends on the individual and collective responsibility of all those who work for or with a partner organisation. It is duty-bound to ensure that all partner organisations and associates respect the requirements set out in the present child safeguarding policy in their own programmes.

V. The duty to report
Any suspected or actual breach of the present child safeguarding policy must be reported without delay to the line manager or designated person. Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.
The International Federation of Journalists recommends that journalists and media organisations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children’s affairs and, in particular, they shall:

1. strive for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children

2. avoid programming and publication of images which intrude upon the media space of children with information which is damaging to them

3. avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children

4. consider carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and minimise harm to children

5. guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest

6. give children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind

7. ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk

8. avoid the use of sexualised images of children

9. use fair, open and straightforward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer

10. verify the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children

11. not make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child

Journalists should put to critical examination the reports submitted and the claims made by Governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.

Media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead, or leading, to the occurrence of these events.
Personal conduct

Partner organisations have codes of conduct for staff and associates. The key points for journalists to focus on are that it is prohibited to:

>> Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive

>> Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative

>> Condone or participate in behaviour with children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive

>> Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or engage in any form of emotional abuse

>> Develop physical and/or sexual relations with children

>> Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive

>> Spend time alone with children away from others

>> Fondle, hold, hug, kiss or touch children in a culturally insensitive way

>> Exchange personal contact details with children

>> Offer children the chance to visit the country of residence of journalist

>> Arrange to stay overnight with a child or their family

>> Introduce other visitors to the community without prior clearance from the relevant partner organisation

>> Return to the community without going through the standard visit process with the relevant organisation

Breaches of the code of conduct may result in serious consequences, including termination of contract and possible civil action or referral for criminal investigation.

All staff members are trained on child safeguarding, so check with them on any situation where you are uncertain of what behaviour is appropriate or if you want to report a concern.
Section two
Good practice and safeguarding considerations
Planning and preparation

From the outset, it is important to plan for and anticipate situations that might present risk and therefore need to be addressed. The following ethical principles and safeguarding considerations represent a good starting point for planning and should inform ongoing activity:

1. Balance the need to maximise children’s participation by hearing their own opinions on the issues affecting their lives, with the need to minimise their exposure to harm.

2. Careful advance planning is crucial. Journalists are responsible for thinking through all possible consequences, both intentional and unintentional, of the information-gathering activity, and for anticipating the effect of the activity on children and their families. If appropriate safeguards cannot be put into place, the activity should not proceed.

3. Discussions should be held with local community members, including children and adolescents whenever possible. Community meetings at different stages of the information-gathering activity can serve a variety of purposes, including sensitisation, review, and interpretation. These discussions can serve the dual purpose of improving adherence to ethical standards and improving the quality of the information gathered.

4. If there is any question about whether the data collection could be harmful to children, only begin the activity if services are in place to address possible consequences. If the information-gathering activity is not associated with a service, prepare referral information for children to reach the required support. Do not conduct the activity without functional support systems in place.

Some of these considerations will be dealt with in subsequent sections. In addition to advance discussions with communities (in this case talking with children and their families/communities, where it is safe to do so) having preparatory conversations with staff who are working with the children will be important to ensure all safeguarding risks and issues are identified and mitigated against.

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Legal and ethical issues

The conduct of those who gather information from children and adolescents is governed by both legal and ethical requirements. Adults working with children may be subject to multiple legal codes governing their behaviour. These codes may include those of the country of the organisation managing the activity, the country funding the activity, and the country where the activity is taking place.

In relation to this research, it will be particularly important to make sure that local laws are followed and local definitions are used, especially for the process of gaining informed consent.

Accessing child respondents

Access to child respondents should be arranged and facilitated by the staff of the relevant partner organisation. Even if the child is not directly connected to a project, staff and partners should organise the meeting and ensure appropriate measures are in place. The primary focus of the staff will be the best interests of the children, and they will make the final decisions about whether it is safe or appropriate for interviews to take place or continue, based on their assessment of the situation.

There may be tensions between producing good material for the research, and the best interests of the child. It is the role of supervising staff to ensure children are kept safe and the responsibility of journalists to accept when an interview may be denied or curtailed as staff judge this to be the right thing for the child or children involved.

“YOU ARE MADE TO HATE YOURSELF AND YOUR LIFE. THE PAIN IS SO MUCH THAT YOU WOULD RATHER DIE BECAUSE YOUR CONDITION DOES NOT ALLOW YOU TO REBEL.”

Bereket, 15 years old, was affected by immigration detention on his way between Eritrea and the South of Sicily via Libya. His testimony was collected by Terre des Hommes and shared at the plenary session of the UN human rights session on 16th June 2014.
The best interest of the child

Before meeting a child, it is of paramount importance to find out what measures have been undertaken or foreseen in his or her best interest. In an identical situation, the best interest of one child can differ from another.

Determining the best interest of the child is a key process for partner organisations when working with children on the move. It provides a framework to ensure that children’s views and opinions are given due weight according to their age, maturity and evolving capacities. It also provides a more comprehensive assessment of children at risk that addresses the full spectrum of the child’s situation, needs and vulnerabilities and considers both short and longer term impacts.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires governments to take children’s views into account in all matters affecting the child, including asylum seekers or unaccompanied children from abroad.

Journalists have the duty to formulate their questions in due respect to the decisions made in the child’s best interest and choose the time and place of interview in accordance. Bad practices have been reported, notably in the South of Italy, where a child from Mali, shortly after stepping off a migrant boat from Lybia, told Terre des Hommes: “I had just arrived to this centre and a journalist spoke to me in French and asked me about my trip and wanted me to talk about the terrible things I saw. I was just too tired and could not speak. He insisted but gave up and then spoke to my friend from Gambia.”

Risk assessment

Before any interview takes place, it is essential that a risk assessment is undertaken, or that existing risk assessments are reviewed in case of any changes to circumstances.

Risks should be assessed in relation to all parties affected by the interviews and the research overall, to include risks for the child or children, families, communities, for the journalists and staff, for the local partner organisations and for the research exercise overall.

Risks identified in relation to these parties should be addressed by a set of mitigating actions and strategies, approved by the research manager and by local manager/s.

Review of existing risk assessments should:

>> Review existing assessments and mitigating actions

>> Consider additional information

>> Anticipate possible negative consequences

>> Identify any further mitigating actions
Informed consent

A full explanation should be given to all participants or potential participants in the research, both in advance of requesting their participation (where possible), and again at the time of interview.

>> Written and verbal explanation should be provided to include details of:

>> the research itself – why it is taking place, who is conducting it, what it hopes to achieve

>> the journalists/investigators – who they are, where they are from

>> the process – what will happen, where, who will be present

>> the outputs – what will happen to the information disclosed by child respondents, how will this be recorded, kept, accessed, disseminated

>> safety and support – the risks involved and your commitment to keep respondents safe and to assist them as far as possible/as required

>> consent – based on the information provided, consent should be obtained in line with the following reminder of the child’s rights in the process:

Where possible the child should be consulted before contacting parents/carers, to check if approaching them may cause difficulties. Should a child indicate for any reason that this would increase risks for him/her, then a judgement will need to be made on whether the child is capable of providing their own consent (based on age, maturity and capacity) and if it is reasonable to proceed on this basis.

Some children move into and are maintained in exploitative situations as a result of parental actions, or in some cases parents/carers are at least complicit in the exploitation. Consenting to their children participating in research may be seen as a threat to these arrangements by parents/carers and there is also the possibility that they may alert those who control child sex workers to the fact that children are participating in the research, which could put children as well as journalists and the overall research at risk.

We respect your rights:

Children’s rights in the research process should be made clear to them along the following lines. You have the right:

- to take time to decide whether to help us
- to refuse to take part without this affecting your care/education/whatever
- to refuse to answer some questions
- to withdraw from this project at any time
- to know we will keep notes and tapes from the groups in a safe lockable place
- to know when we talk about the research or write reports, we always change people’s names so that they remain anonymous
Interviewing children

Engaging and communicating with children

Although it may be fair to assume that the children who have agreed to participate in interviews are willing to speak about their circumstances and their experiences, it is inevitable that they will have some anxieties about this. Also, as a result of their experiences at the hands of adults, their levels of trust are likely to be severely diminished. So it is important to follow basic principles of effective communication with children, and to establish a safe and comfortable environment where the children can feel as relaxed as possible – although being alone with a child in a secluded place is not a safe option.

Thought will need to be given to where the interviews should take place. Local staff will advise on this but children themselves should be consulted on where is best for them to meet. A neutral venue may be best, but somewhere they are familiar with and safe in could help put them at their ease. A place where they can be seen, either a public place or a place where they are very visible to others in the community entering and leaving, may not be a safe or relaxing option.

The physical space within the venue also needs to be made welcoming and be designed to relax the interviewee.

Initial rapport building is important – just saying hello, being warm and friendly, showing an interest in the child and talking about a neutral topic along the lines of where they have come from, the locality, what they like to do, and so on, will demonstrate a respect and regard for the child that will help to break down any possible barriers.

A clear introduction and explanation of the research exercise – including purpose of research, rights of the child as outlined above, consent, confidentiality, use and dissemination of research data, supports available, and some background on the interviewer – will also help and show respect for the child.

Children on the move, especially those who have been abused and exploited have often felt powerless in their interactions with adults, so giving the child some control over proceedings and consulting them on how the process will go, even just minor things such as seating arrangements, when to take a break, and so on, will also go a long way to demonstrating respect and concern for their safety and well being.
Abuse is based on an imbalance of power, and in an interview the media professional has far more power than the child.

**Always:**

- make sure that the child or person looking after him/her knows that they are talking to a journalist
- **try to interview the child in a safe, private space**
- explain the purpose of the interview and the way it will be used to the child or person looking after him/her
- **obtain prior permission** from the child and/or the person responsible for him/her for all interviews. *If necessary, where this is appropriate, this permission should be given in writing*
- be sure to obtain the child’s permission in his/her language and make sure the decision is taken with the agreement of an adult the child trusts
- **avoid questions, attitudes and comments** that reflect a value judgement or which are insensitive to cultural values
- **show the circumstances which make the children vulnerable while respecting their dignity**
- try to show the beneficiary during the rehabilitative phase, during or after a project intervention
- make sure that filenames do not reveal any information that would enable the child to be identified when electronic images are sent
- **be familiar with and abide** by the rules for the use of social media – See *Social Media Policy* (an official internal Terre des Hommes document 11) – for anything relating to online publications

*continues over*
Never:

- ask questions which put the child in danger or expose him/her to possible humiliation
- force discussion on subjects which are painful for the children when the child does not want to discuss these
- discriminate against children when choosing who to interview
- stage a story or ask children to tell a story that they have not experienced
- add to the stigmatisation of a child
- label children or describe them in a way that might attract a hostile response, particularly physical and psychological abuse, or discrimination or ostracism by their communities
- harm children in any way
- publish a story that could endanger a child, those around him/her or his/her community
- publish personal and identifying details relating to an organisation’s activities and/or children on the internet (social networks, blogs, etc.), without having been explicitly asked to do so by a person in charge of communication.
- be in contact with children on social networks for personal reasons
- take a child’s contact details (email address, address, telephone number) or give him/her yours
The following guidelines from the IJF\textsuperscript{12} describe how an interview can be carried out effectively while still respecting the rights of a child:

Interviews with children should, except in exceptional circumstances, always take place with someone acting in the best interests of the child on hand, to protect the child and to call a halt if necessary.

The interviewer should sit or stand at the same height as the child and not ‘talk down’, either literally or metaphorically.

In the case of radio or television interviews it is essential that the child is relaxed and not distracted or overawed by the camera or technology. This may mean that camera crews have to spend time around children until they stop focusing on the cameras and lights.

Questions should be directed to the child, not to the adult, and the adult should observe and not intervene—otherwise you get the adult’s story, rather than that of the child.

An interviewer should adopt a calm, friendly and neutral voice and not react with shock or amazement.

Questions should be clear and straightforward, and should not lead the child. At first ask open questions (so the child is not pressurised to respond in any particular way) and then use closed questions to narrow down on facts that you have to check.

Questions can be repeated in a different form to cross-check that the child has understood and has expressed himself or herself clearly.

It is better to ask factual questions about what someone said and did, than to ask about how they felt. A child will often reveal, when he or she is comfortable with the interview, how he or she felt, but may be pressured by direct questioning about feelings.

Wherever possible corroboration should be sought (good practice for all kinds of interviews).

If interviewing through a translator, care should be taken that the interpreter translates exactly what the child says and does not mediate or summarise answers.

Attributes like the gender, cultural background, age and ethnicity of the interviewer and anyone who accompanies the interviewer, may have significant influences on the process and the child’s willingness to talk. Where possible and practical, at least two adults, preferably one male and one female, should supervise all activities where children are involved and remain present at all times.
Photography and videos

In general, the following key points apply to everyone that might film or photograph children:\(^{13}\):

>>> Obtain consent of the child and his/her parents or carers before taking photographs and images. Ensure that the children and their parents/carers fully understand why the photographs are being taken and how they will be used.\(^ {14}\).

>>> Photographers should be accompanied by a staff member from a partner organisation when taking photos or making videos of beneficiaries (use sensitivity here on the number of people involved).

>>> Take and use photographs and images of children that are dignified and respectful and that do not present them as victims, vulnerable or submissive.

>>> Ensure children are adequately dressed in photographs and images and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.

>>> Protect the safety and privacy of children and their families by not using their images on the internet without explicit consent, or using them in any way that reveals their identity or location.

>>> Change the name and disguise the appearance of any child presented as:

- a victim of sexual abuse or exploitation
- a victim of trafficking or ill treatment
- a perpetrator of sexual abuse or acts of physical violence
- HIV-positive, living with AIDS or whose death was caused by AIDS, unless the child, a relative or a guardian has given his/her authorisation
- accused, suspected or guilty of a crime
- an armed child soldier
- a former child soldier who is not holding a weapon but who could be in danger

>>> Use images that tell a story and that will enable the public to discuss the subject.

>>> Try to take photos from a child’s height and when they are not obviously aware of the presence of the camera.

>>> Comply with local traditions and restrictions relating to pictures or find out about them from local teams.

>>> Make sure the pictures are an honest representation of the situation and facts.

>>> Do not use photographs and images of children for any purpose other than that agreed by the partner organisation.

If in doubt, refer to the organisation’s Child Safeguarding officer.
Section three
Reporting and responding to child protection concerns
Reporting child safeguarding issues

Reporting immediately

If you are faced with a child safeguarding issue, you must immediately report any concerns to the project manager or to the designated person identified to you as responsible for receiving such reports and who is trained to deal with child safeguarding issues and activating the local child protection procedures.

Threshold for reporting

In normal circumstances, any concerns about the safety of a child would trigger a report. However, it is known in advance that the children involved in project are at risk and may have been or are currently experiencing abuse. It is not practical to report every instance in which a child tells of abuse or risk of further abuse, and the project would not be possible if this was to happen. In these circumstances, the normal threshold for reporting is suspended, but that does not mean that no reports will be made.

The following protocol is adapted from Save the Children research where interviews involving children engaged in commercial sex work raised significant issues relating to confidentiality and operation of its child safeguarding policy.

The protocol allows for deviation from normal procedures of mandatory reporting, although it is vitally important that all those concerned in the process, and especially the children themselves, are clear about the limits of confidentiality that apply to the interviews in question.

Agreement not to automatically report the child to the statutory authorities must not be interpreted as a ‘blank cheque’ in relation to confidentiality. Equally, responsibilities and concerns for the safety of children do not diminish on the basis that the interviewees consent to engage with the process. The following procedure is aimed at ensuring an interview process that upholds the rights of the children involved, enables a productive exchange of information, and also promotes the protection of children in line with commitments contained in the child safeguarding policy.
Examples reporting protocol for children known to be at risk

Principles

All children involved in commercial sexual exploitation are sexually, physically and emotionally at risk.

All children at risk of commercial sexual exploitation are children in need of services and are also children in need of protection, though use of statutory child protection procedures may not always prove effective or appropriate in all circumstances (see below).

Confidentiality and reporting

The research recognises the potential risks faced by children engaged in commercial sex work, and will act in a way that respects the rights of these children and also promotes their protection and freedom from abuse and exploitation.

The research interviews should be conducted within current agreements and guidelines, covering the use of gathered data, confidentiality, and the protection of the identity of participants.

In addition to this, the position on child protection must be made clear to the interviewee. It should be explained that the usual thresholds for triggering a child protection referral are being suspended for the purposes of these interviews. However, it must also be explained that, if in the course of the interview the interviewee passes on information that staff feel they are compelled to act on, then in exceptional circumstances confidentiality may be breached.

It must be explained to interviewees that breaching confidentiality in exceptional circumstances could include situations when:

>> a child is clearly not in charge of their own safety (being held against own will, for example)

>> the emotional/mental state of child is such that it places their own or a third party’s life at risk

>> a third party is at risk of abuse (younger sibling within a family, for example)

>> an allegation of misconduct is made against a member of staff or other professional working with children

>> the child’s parents/carers or an adult in a position of trust or responsibility to the child is facilitating, organising or encouraging the exploitation

>> interviewee identifies individuals responsible for encouraging or organising the abuse

In such circumstances, staff must discuss the situation internally and agree what action to take, in line with the child safeguarding policy and the agreements surrounding this research. The child must also be involved in discussions relating to any concerns, and their views taken seriously.
Assessments of the child’s age, competence, understanding and ability to effect change in their current circumstances must also be taken into account.

At the end of each interview there must be a full debrief involving the researcher, the local manager and the research supervisor, to consider any issues arising from the interview. These discussions should consider the content of the material divulged during the course of the interview, and should also make some overall assessment of the situation of each child and whether or not further action is needed. Further action could take the form of particular support to the child, or might include a child protection referral if there are serious concerns regarding the safety of the child or of other children, as described in the ‘exceptional circumstances’ criteria above.

In the event of such circumstances arising, the local manager must activate the local child protection procedures to raise the matter with the partner. The referral should be discussed with the child concerned wherever and as soon as possible, and on the basis of agreements reached as part of this process, contact must then be made with the appropriate statutory authorities.

Support

Support should be made available to children following the interviews, as disclosure of information is likely to provoke strong feelings in the interviewees. It may be more appropriate to identify national and local sources of advice and information, and to help children access support where it is clear they wish to make changes to their present situation.

Contact should be made with the local authority responsible for child protection in order to advise them of the interviews, agree the reporting protocol that is being adopted for the purposes of these interviews, and to gather information and advice from them on local responses to children at risk from commercial sexual exploitation. This advice will be important for the professionals involved in the research process, but it is also important for the children themselves to be aware of supports that might be available to them via the local authorities.
Maintaining anonymity

The journalist has a duty to anticipate ways in which the confidentiality of the respondent may be comprised once the interview is published. For example, just changing names may not be sufficient to guarantee anonymity if the person is the only refugee in a classroom, or the only girl in a group. In such cases it can be useful to discuss with the respondent in question what to do for the best. They may wish to withdraw consent to use their data, or they may be happy to be identifiable. Respondents may want to use their real names in order to have acknowledgement for their work or input. Journalists need to think this through, as respondents may not be aware of all possible consequences of publishing their views or experiences openly.

Storage of data relating to child protection

Data that relate specifically to a child protection issue will need to be stored separately for a longer period of time. These records may need to be passed onto a third party at a later date.

Child Safeguarding Training

It is the responsibility of project managers to ensure that all external and temporary journalists receive an induction/briefing on the child safeguarding policy. This needs to include all associated staff that may be involved in the research process, for example, translators, transcribers and administration staff.

Identity, police checks and other background checks for journalists

If a journalist’s remit is to conduct interviews with children (both internal staff and commissioned), it is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure that they are ID and police checked. Journalists are not permitted to have unaccompanied or unsupervised access to children until a satisfactory police check is received. Until that time journalists should be accompanied by a member of staff who is police checked.

It is equally important to check on the identity of those applying for (or holding) such posts, by asking to see documents such as birth certificate or passport and by following up references offered. Reference requests should seek specific information on the candidate’s suitability to work with children.
Procedures where a breach of the child safeguarding policy by the journalist is suspected or alleged

a. The partner organisation will undertake to help the victim and will immediately take the necessary steps to protect and support him/her

b. It will try to establish the facts in the most objective way possible

c. It will make child protection provisions to ensure that acts of this kind are not repeated

d. It may take disciplinary action such as terminating the relationship with the journalist associate concerned

e. It may take civil action against the journalist or associate who has infringed the present Code of Conduct

f. It may report to the relevant authorities any violation of the Code of Conduct that is likely to be in breach of national law

List of contacts

Prior to conducting research in any country it is important to assemble useful contacts for a range of services and relevant stakeholders. These should be available from local partners, and may include names and phone/email contacts of police, social welfare, medical and other professional services such as victim response services. They could also include details of legal services and professional research bodies, as well as practical and logistical details.
Support for journalists and rewards for participants

Provision of support for investigators/journalists

Given the content of the interviews, the emotional impact on the journalists and others that might be involved should not be underestimated. Journalists should anticipate feeling distress as a result of the process and consider what steps they will take to de-stress following each interview and/or the process overall. In addition, where necessary, professional support should be identified and provided.

Reward/recognition of child respondents

There has been a lot of debate around rewarding children for their participation in research and other activities organised by NGOs, for example, and this still remains something of a grey area with mixed views, although there is a sense that payment for participating in research is problematic and can distort the process. However providing compensation is less of an issue. So for example, if a child loses money because she/he has taken time off from work to attend and interview, an possibly also had to spend money to travel to meet the investigator/journalist, then, depending on the context, a form of compensation may be reasonable. Loss of earning, travel and other out-of-pocket expenses should be seen as compensation and not rewards and preferably be given in kind (eg. bus ticket). Provision of drinks and snacks is also a common form of ‘treat’ when participating in such a process, but again this should be seen as a courtesy rather than a reward for participation.
Checklist for Keeping Children Safe during the project

Project checklist

☑ Ensure all journalists and associates have been fully briefed on the child safeguarding policy and procedures

☑ Assess and minimise the risks of harm to participants

☑ Explain to each respondent who you are and the purpose of the research

☑ Ensure that all participants give informed consent to their involvement

☑ Explain that the child is under no obligation to participate and that they have the option not to answer any question and can stop the interview at any point

☑ Follow the guidelines when taking photographs or filming

☑ If the potential participants have been defined as children at risk, ensure the implications for child protection been considered

☑ If the project manager believes that the reporting threshold for child protection needs to be raised, ensure the necessary processes for developing a protocol that establishes the limits of confidentiality been drawn up and agreed

☑ Have information to hand about possible sources of help and support

☑ Be prepared to deal with any distress children show during the research process

☑ Make practical arrangements to protect the confidentiality of respondents

☑ Discuss how you would handle situations where risk of serious harm to respondents is disclosed
Acknowledgements

This guidance was written in the framework of the Destination Unknown International Campaign led by Terre des Hommes International Federation, its member organisations and partners who have joined forces to develop protection mechanisms for children on the move, raise awareness and advocate the campaign messages for policy change. All together, ten demands have been issued to improve the situation of children on the move.

"WE HAVE PUT CHILDREN ON THE GLOBAL AGENDA. WE ARE ENGAGED WITH GOVERNMENTS FOR CONCRETE ACTIONS FOR ACCESS TO SERVICES, FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND ENDING IMMIGRATION DETENTION OF CHILDREN."

Ignacio Packer, Terre des Hommes IF secretary general

The organisations behind the campaign are active at different levels along important child migration routes around the world. Measures are taken in places of origin, of transit and destination. For instance, alternatives (education, income generating activities, etc.) are sought in communities to prevent children from leaving; mobility routes are identified to improve safety and care for the children who take it; protection measures implemented in countries of destination in collaboration with the authorities.

"I AM ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION OF MIGRANTS, INCLUDING VERY YOUNG CHILDREN."

Ban Ki-moon, United nations secretary general

notably leads the Destination Unknown partners to aim at ending child immigration detention around the world.

"WHAT IN THE WORLD WOULD FORCE CHILDREN TO SPEND THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS, RISK THEIR LIVES, BE DETAINED AND BRUTALISED TO COME TO EUROPE?"

Farah Abdi Abdullah, 18 year-old asylum seeker from Somalia
All children, whoever they are and wherever they are, have a right to be protected.

This guidance was adapted by Sophie Balbo from the guidance written for Keeping Children Safe by Paul Nolan.

**Terre des Hommes**  
International Federation

This guidance was produced in the framework of the Destination Unknown international campaign to protect children on the move:  
[http://destination-unknown.org](http://destination-unknown.org)

**Keeping Children Safe**

Keeping Children Safe is a membership network of organisations working together to increase safeguards offered to children. They advocate for the adoption of international standards on safeguarding children and are committed to strengthening organisations’ capacities to deliver on their safeguarding commitments.  
[www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

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