

Kindernothilfe



# Quality Standards for Kindernothilfe's Child Rights Approach

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All Kindernothilfe's efforts, both in Germany and abroad, are orientated around the child rights approach. Our goal is to ensure that our programs, public relations and education work all contribute towards realizing children's rights on all fronts – upholding the child rights principles in all our areas of work.

Achieving this goal requires numerous learning processes and further development in our program and institutional work. Our project work, methods and educational approach, as well as our organizational and personnel development efforts, must all do justice to the child rights approach.

To gauge how successful we are in implementing the child rights approach, Kindernothilfe has developed a series of quality standards. They incorporate ten central aspects of the approach; special criteria and alarm signals serve as a guide for assessing implementation quality.

The first five standards are institutional ones describing the requirements within the organization itself (Kindernothilfe and our partners). The remaining five standards concern our programmatic approach and describe the demands placed on joint project work. All our standards apply to both new project applications as well as to projects which are already receiving support.

## Our quality standards

- help to generate a common understanding both at Kindernothilfe and amongst our partners with regard to implementing the child rights approach.
- represent our ideals, showing us which road our organizations and projects should follow in order to be able to implement the child rights approach as a whole.
- are the starting point for developing minimum standards for the various aspects of the child rights approach.

# Overview of our ten quality standards

## Institutional standards

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### **Standard 1: Organization culture**

The organization<sup>1</sup> brings the human rights culture alive.

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### **Standard 2: Learning organization**

The organization continually strives to improve its skills so as to be able to contribute towards implementing children's rights.

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### **Standard 3: Child protection**

The organization implements a child protection policy.

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### **Standard 4: Accountability**

The organization fulfills its accountability commitments.

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### **Standard 5:**

#### **Advocacy and public relations work**

The organization's advocacy and public relations work contributes to the implementation of children's rights

## Programmatic standards

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### **Standard 6: The well-being of the child**

Our project work is primarily oriented at ensuring a child's well-being<sup>2</sup>.

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### **Standard 7:**

#### **Participation and equality of treatment**

Our project work allows children<sup>3</sup> to participate at all stages. The principles of non-discrimination are preserved at all times.

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### **Standard 8: Children's rights as our goal**

The goal of our project work is to combat recognized child rights abuse and to contribute to ensuring that children's rights are realized.

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### **Standard 9: Empowerment**

Our project work strengthens the children and their environment – empowering them to claim their rights.

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### **Standard 10: Duty bearers**

Our project work contributes towards ensuring that the duty bearers<sup>4</sup> uphold their commitments with regard to realizing children's rights.

<sup>1</sup> "The organization" refers to both Kindernothilfe itself as well as our overseas partners.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of a child's well-being is used in accordance with Article 3 of the "Convention on the Rights of the Child".

<sup>3</sup> Modeled on the definition listed in the "Convention on the Rights of the Child"; children are considered to be all those people who have not yet turned 18.

<sup>4</sup> Duty bearers include the State, players from civil society and the economy as well as – in the case of children – the parents.

# 1 Institutional quality standards

## Standard 1: Organization culture

### The organization brings the human rights culture alive.

Anyone wishing to pay a lasting contribution to human and children's rights must first bring his/her own attitude and actions in line with the human rights principles in everything he/she does.

For an organization this means: It must bring the human rights culture alive. It actively contributes to respecting and

protecting human rights and ensuring they are upheld in all its various fields of work and all areas of life. To achieve this, it develops appropriate internal organizational structures and ensures, when cooperating with other organizations, that these likewise dedicate themselves to a culture of preserving human and children's rights.

#### Criteria

Those working at the organization have contracts which comply with the national legal and pay regulations. These are the minimum requirements.

Those working at the organization receive a remuneration for their work in line with domestic legal and pay regulations. These are the minimum requirements.

The organization actively applies rules and legal provisions for combating discrimination.

Employee participation is valued and promoted.

The management style is participatory and situational.

Agreements and statements of commitment (e.g. anti-corruption code, code of conduct, child protection etc.) are signed and adherence to these monitored.

The organization's procurement activities and cooperation with other companies and organizations take social and ecological criteria into account.

The organization promotes mutual respect amongst the employees.

#### Alarm signals

Employees are paid below the minimum wage level.

The organization ignores its duty to protect and support special employee groups (e.g. expectant mothers, handicapped people).

Information is not appropriately forwarded and decision-making processes are not transparent.

Freedom of expression leads to personal disadvantages.

Leadership methods make participation difficult – with participation in important decisions not being provided for.

There are no mechanisms in place for monitoring signed agreements or statements of commitment. No sanctions are introduced in the case of breaches.

Sexist behavior towards employees and mobbing are accepted – with no intervention on the part of the superiors.

## Standard 2: Learning organization

**The organization continually strives to improve its skills so as to be able to contribute towards implementing children's rights.**

Introducing and implementing the child rights approach is an ongoing learning process. What is crucial is that the approach is accepted as an interdisciplinary task and driven by all employees in all areas of work.

Employees at all levels are required to further develop their skills on an ongoing basis and to attend advanced training sessions.

The organization ensures that attending advanced training sessions to improve specialist skills, competence in applying methods and social competence is possible. An open learning process aims to ensure that all employees and players develop a common attitude towards children and their rights.

### Criteria

The organization's employees are appropriately qualified for their human and child rights work according to their role.

All the organization's employees are in a continual learning process, improving their child rights skills in line with their role.

The organization ensures that its employees can participate in advanced training measures in all areas, promotes them according to their roles with regard to implementing the child rights approach and provides the necessary resources accordingly.

The exchange of experience and *Good Practices* with regard to implementing the child rights approach is promoted – both within and between the individual organizations.

The organization has a system for exchanging and transferring knowledge and skills with regard to children's rights and the child rights approach.

### Alarm signals

When selecting employees neither their specialist knowledge with regard to the child rights approach nor their general attitude towards children and their rights receive appropriate attention.

No critical discussions with regard to positions or procedures are held, resp. innovations are blocked.

The topic of children's and human rights only plays a role in departments which are directly involved in project work – not in departments, for example, concerned with administration or funding.

The organization does not have an advanced training plan in place which pays adequate attention to the child rights approach.

## Standard 3: Child protection

### The organization implements child protection regulations.

According to the World Health Organization, ten percent of all boys and 20 percent of girls worldwide become victims of sexual violence or abuse. In institutions working with children the risks for boys and girls are particularly high – both in state as well as private and church institutions. For this very reason, child protection at an institutional level is a matter of central importance when implementing the child rights approach.

In order to protect the children participating in our programs from violence and abuse, our organization implements child protection guidelines. These also protect our employees from false accusations. In cases of abuse, they ensure transparent communication on the part of the organization vis-à-vis the public.

#### Criteria

The organization implements preventive measures, such as a child protection code of conduct, risk analysis or hiring criteria (e.g. certificate of good conduct acc. to § 30 a BZRG [= Federal Central Criminal Register Act]).

All employees and other relevant players (e.g. journalists, volunteers, visitors) are accordingly sensitized and trained.

Children participating in the projects are trained and their position strengthened so that they can better protect themselves from being abused or maltreated by the organization's employees or other players.

The organization has a clear, accessible system for reporting and tracking any cases of suspected abuse (both internally and within the respective penal system), in which responsibilities (incl. the naming of a person of trust) are clearly defined.

Comprehensive rehabilitation measures are in place (both legal and psychological) for children who have become victims of institutional maltreatment or exploitation.

The organization develops clear guidelines for both internal and external communication in cases of abuse or maltreatment.

The ability of other players in the children's environment, such as their families, schools etc., to protect the children from abuse and maltreatment, is bolstered.

#### Alarm signals

Violations or conspicuous behavior are void of any consequences.

The topics of child abuse and maltreatment are taboo and not mentioned.

Neither employees nor children know how or where to report cases of suspected abuse or which steps need to be taken.

There is no collaboration with governmental offices.

Cases of abuse or maltreatment are tabooed or covered up.

## Standard 4: Accountability

### The organization fulfills its accountability commitments.

One of the most important principles of the child rights approach is that all duty bearers are accountable for their actions towards the rights bearers and other stakeholders.

As a result, the organization, which is a duty bearer, is set two tasks: On the one hand, it bears both administrative and financial accountability vis-à-vis governmental offices, donors and sponsors. On the other hand, it has to inform all the children involved and those around them about its agenda targets, activities and results. In doing this, the organization

acknowledges that the children have rights – presenting them with the opportunity of having an influence on the projects.

Furthermore, the organization sets out exactly how it takes human rights standards and principles into account.

If the organization fulfills its accountability commitments, it becomes a role model, then being in a position to demand from the other duty bearers that they are similarly accountable.

#### Criteria

Statements of self-commitment, codes, human rights standards and principles are signed and implemented.

The organization has developed processes for answering to governmental bodies in line with the respective legal provisions.

The organization informs donors, sponsors and the general public about its activities and results in a transparent fashion.

The organization develops mechanisms for informing the children and those around them about its targets, activities and results.

The organization has developed mechanisms for reminding the duty bearers of their accountability.

#### Alarm signals

No one is responsible and there are no mechanisms in place for monitoring such declarations.

Donors, sponsors and the public do not know how or to which purpose the funds have been used.

No information suitable for children is available. An educational concept to provide the children with information is also lacking.



#### This standard is also connected with:

- Standard 7 “Participation and equality of treatment”, as participation and accountability are mutually dependent.
- Standard 10 “Duty bearers”, as it is a question of calling the duty bearers to account through specific activities.

## Standard 5: Advocacy and public relations work

### Our organization contributes to implementing children's rights through its advocacy and public relations work.

In order to realize children's rights in the long-term, profound social and political change is required. Our organization contributes to this process through its advocacy and public relations work.

In our advocacy work we ensure, among other things, that the organization takes a clear stance with regard to topics of relevance to children's rights and that we are networked with other organizations and groups. Our target is to give as much

weight as possible to the demands placed on the duty bearers and to mutually demand of them that they uphold their legal commitments and implement structural change favoring the realization of children's rights.

We plan to promote the setting up of local, national and international networks so that our advocacy work is as effective, specific and realistic as possible.

#### Criteria

The organization takes a clear stance with regard to topics of relevance to children's rights.

The organization provides the public with information, sensitizing it for topics of relevance to children's rights.

Our advocacy work harmonizes with work in other areas and the reality facing the target groups.

The organization develops criteria and clearly defines which networks it collaborates in, in which role and with which goals.

Networking tasks are interlinked, where useful, across the various levels (local, national, international), in order to drive structural change.

#### Alarm signals

No policy documents, studies, fact sheets etc. are available.

The topic of children's rights is only used because it is fashionable. It is not consistently mentioned in all external communications.

There is no advocacy concept in place.



#### This standard is also connected with:

- Standard 1 "Organization culture"; as taking a position with regard to relevant topics is part of the human rights culture.
- Standard 10 "Duty bearers"; as advocacy work represents one of the strategies for working with duty bearers.



## 2 Programmatic quality standards

### Standard 6: The well-being of the child

#### **Our project work is primarily oriented at ensuring a child's well-being.**

The child's well-being plays a prominent role. It constitutes one of the four basic principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is also vital to implementing the child rights approach.

The following applies to all our project work: Any measure involving children must first and foremost bear the children's interests in mind.

At the same time, we must refrain from introducing any activity which could negatively impact a child's well-being.

#### Criteria

Our target, strategy and activity statements clearly demonstrate that we put the child's well-being first.

Our budgets and financial reports illustrate that the children's well-being is the main focus.

The employees are suitably qualified to be able to take a child's well-being into consideration throughout all stages of the project.

Steps are taken to ensure that the project work does not have any negative effect on the children.

Conflicts of interests are resolved in the interests of the children.

#### Alarm signals

Project work is not aimed at prioritizing the children's well-being but instead, for example, focuses on furthering interests which are of a purely economic nature or to the benefit of specific individuals.

Administration costs are disproportionately high compared to spending which directly benefits the children (incl. teaching staff).

"Prestige projects" are primarily funded.

The employees do not have sufficient educational skills to be able to decide what is good for the child.

Project work leads to the stigmatization or incapacitation of the children or a repetition of trauma.

Project work leads to a subjective worsening of the children's situation.

Children have no opportunity of articulating or representing their interests.



#### **This standard is also connected with:**

- All the other standards as the child's well-being should be at the center of focus at all other levels.
- Standard 7 "Participation and equality of treatment", as participating children can ensure that measures are oriented according to the children's well-being.

## Standard 7: Participation and equality of treatment

**Our project work allows children to participate at all stages.  
The principles of non-discrimination are preserved at all times.**

Participation is a major component of our project work: We enable children to take part in decisions and in shaping these throughout; at the same time we sensitize those responsible for laying the foundations for the children to participate.

It is extremely important to have all children participating - "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's

or his or her parent's or legal guardian's color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status" (Art. 2, Convention on the Rights of the Child). Additionally, supportive measures for marginalized children or children discriminated against are introduced in our project work to allow these to participate.

### Criteria

A child-friendly, inclusive environment is created in which the trust of all the children is gained and within which they can freely voice their opinions.

During all the project work phases, mechanisms and structures are in place which allow the children to participate voluntarily and where relevant.

Material which is easy-to-understand and suitable for children is compiled to help them understand the processes and responsibilities which the project involves.

The measures carried out also lead to a higher level of child participation outside the scope of the actual project work (family, school, community).

Some project activities are carried out to prepare the duty bearers for an increased child participation.

When selecting the target group for the project, huge importance is placed on the principle of non-discrimination.

The participation of disadvantaged groups, such as, for example, disabled children, is especially promoted through inclusive development measures.

### Alarm signals

The children are met with an authoritarian, derogatory tone.

The children are afraid to broach the issue of discrimination or abuse etc.

The children receive excessive punishment.

Participation is feigned.

Children are included to support the opinions of the adults.

The project work does not react to conflicts between children and adults which arise as a result of increased self-confidence and the willingness to voice one's opinion on the part of the children.

Children from marginalized groups are unable to access the project.

Disadvantaged groups are not proportionally integrated into the project work according to the share of the total population they represent.



#### **This standard is also connected with:**

- All the other standards, as participation and non-discrimination constitute basic principles of the child rights approach.
- Standard 9 "Empowerment", as participation and empowerment are closely linked.

## Standard 8: Children's rights as our goal

**The goal of our project work is to combat recognized child rights abuse and to contribute to ensuring that children's rights are realized.**

All project work is aimed at contributing to realizing children's rights and combating recognized child rights abuse. The situation analysis is the foundation on which we build. It is used to identify and analyze child rights abuse, its causes and the various responsibilities in the respective context. This always centers around the question of how to ensure the right to survival and development, as well as all the other rights established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Based on the situation analysis, suitable project strategies are developed to strengthen the position of the rights bearers

(please refer to Standard 9) and put those with accountability in the position of being able to implement children's rights (please also refer to Standard 10).

Apart from project work activities which directly contribute to the protection and support of the children concerned, other activities are planned to change existing structures and realize children's rights in the long-term.

### Criteria

The project work is based on a children's rights situation analysis (analysis of child rights violations, its causes and the respective responsibilities).

Intervention strategies are developed to specifically combat identified child rights abuse.

Project work aims to bring about sustainable, structural change.

If the right to survival or development of one or more children is endangered, a solution is sought.

### Alarm signals

No rights-based preliminary studies are carried out.

Changes in the child rights situation are either not recorded or have no further influence on the project work.

Project activities only combat the symptoms – not the causes – thus encouraging a conventional, aid-based attitude.

The fact that the well-being of a child is in danger is simply ignored due to a lack of resources or similar reasons.



#### **This standard is also connected with:**

- Standard 9 "Empowerment" and Standard 10 "Duty bearers", as strengthening the position of the rights bearers and the accountability of the duty bearers are both strategies aimed at realizing children's rights.

## Standard 9: Empowerment

### Our project work strengthens the children and their environment – empowering them to claim their rights.

To ensure that rights become reality, all involved players must understand how the rights and duty bearers interact and what their respective roles are. Only if each side is aware of its tasks and functions can a child's rights be materialized.

On the one hand, project work strengthens the position of the children and those around them as rights bearers so that they

are aware of their rights and can develop a collective capacity. They can then reinforce their claims to rights and campaign for them using appropriate resources. On the other hand, project work contributes to ensuring that the duty bearers fulfill their tasks (please refer to Standard 10).

#### Criteria

Through project work children are encouraged and supported to campaign for their rights and interests and are also taught the necessary skills to this end.

The measures carried out result in the empowerment of the children, their families and communities – sometimes even showing effects beyond the scope of the actual project work.

Project work trains the rights holders with regard to strategies on how they can bring their influence to bear. This work is carried out collectively and incorporates child and community participation as well as that of other civil society players. It aims at influencing decisions taken by those with responsibility.

The project work is aimed at generating social awareness with regard to children's rights.

#### Alarm signals

Despite pro-human rights rhetoric, most of the activities undertaken only promote a passive attitude amongst the children.

No educational concept is developed to provide the children with appropriate information to enable them to effectively raise their claims with those responsible in their communities.

Once a measure has been completed there is no children's or community organization in place to campaign for children's rights or hold the duty bearers accountable.



#### This standard is also connected with:

- Standard 7 "Participation and equality of treatment", as both of these principles can be viewed as being prerequisites for achieving empowerment.
- Standard 10 "Duty bearers", as it is a question of calling the duty bearers to account.

## Standard 10: Duty bearers

### **Our project work contributes towards ensuring that the duty bearers fulfill their tasks with regard to realizing children's rights.**

Not only does our project work strengthen the position of the children and those around them, it also contributes to ensuring that the duty bearers fulfill their tasks with regard to realizing children's rights. This is the only way of creating legal, political, cultural and social structures in which children's rights can be realized.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates which obligations the State, as the major bearer of responsibility, has.

Furthermore, the child rights approach also clearly illustrates exactly what responsibility civil society and private persons bear in their respective environments.

To ensure that the desired level of influence is achieved, it is of major importance that those who bear responsibility have the required level of competence to meet their responsibilities.

#### Criteria

The employees have been accordingly sensitized and understand both their own tasks and roles, as joint responsibility-bearers, as well as those of the major bodies responsible for realizing children's rights.

Project work incorporates activities which specifically target state and social responsibility-bearers – sensitizing them and strengthening their capabilities so that they can fulfill their legislative and political duties.

Project work incorporates activities which specifically target those persons around the children (e.g. parents, teachers) so that they can fulfill their responsibilities.

#### Alarm signals

Work in the political environment is categorically declined – without stating any reasons.

Project work only applies to the direct target group, the children, and does not include any other players.



#### **This standard is also connected with:**

- Standard 5 "Advocacy", as this represents one of the strategies for working with duty bearers.

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## Impressum

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