

DON BOSCO NETWORK



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Introduction

This safeguarding statement is a document which applies to all our members, staff and volunteers in ensuring safeguarding of children and young people in the (Salesian) settings we are working in.

Safeguarding is a subject of high importance in working with (young) people. It deals with the subject of protecting children, young people and adults against various forms of abuse. As such it is closely connected to Human Rights: each form of abuse is a violation of the Universal declaration of Human Rights. Fundamental rights belong to everyone in the world. It does not matter who you are, what you believe in or how you choose to live.

DBN recognises that there are specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks that exist for children and is committed to make every effort to ensure children are safe and protected in its international programme work. Therefore it wants to put high standards for NGO's to be a member of DBN by subscribing this document. Secondly DBN is represented on different European platforms and settings in which we want to express excellence in working and defending human rights through our educational work.

To help partners act on their obligations to manage risks towards children and vulnerable adults DBN has a set of safeguarding compliance standards which are taken up at the end of this document.

DBN commits itself to keep this document at the centre of the work and to promote and ensure the safeguarding of every human in all the work it does.

1. DBN as Worldwide Federative Association

Don Bosco Network (DBN) is constituted in the form of a worldwide federative Association of non-governmental organizations (hereinafter “NGOs”) working for the benefit of the poor, in particular of marginalized children and youth, in accordance with the Italian Law.

The members of DBN are Salesian development NGOs. Their vision, mission and action are inspired by on the values and principles expressed by the Gospel, the Teaching of the Catholic Church and the orientations of the Salesian congregation.

The members of DBN subscribe to the fundamental values of social justice, fraternity and solidarity with the most vulnerable people, especially poor and marginalized children and youth.

2. Don Bosco Network promoting safeguarding

In this statement, DBN in partnership with its members and stakeholders seeks to outline the centrality of Child protection, Child Safeguarding and Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adult to our work and our way of being. DBN shall comply in full, with all laws and regulations relating to the protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults both in Italy and in the country where DBN projects and work are based.

DBN requires each of its members to have its own Safeguarding and Protection Policy in place that reflects the spirit of the DBN Child Safeguarding Statement and all legal requirements and best practice of the country in which they are based and work. The Member has the responsibility for implementing such a policy.

DBN is a network of members and as such is not directly involved on the ground with young people and vulnerable adults. DBN members, however, do provide funding, resources and sometimes personnel for projects involving children and vulnerable adults and it is Member’s responsibility to assure donors and authorities in their respective countries that implementing partners adhere to the international safeguarding standards as set out below.

3. Definitions and Interpretation

DBN	Don Bosco Network is a worldwide federative Association of non-governmental organizations (hereinafter “NGOs”) working for the benefit of the poor, in particular of marginalized children and youth in developing countries, in accordance with the Italian Law.
Child	A child is anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives.
Youth	any person between the ages of 18 and 24 years.
DBN Board, Member, Staff	– As explained in DBN Bylaws and Internal Regulations
NGO	Non-Government Organisation. Members fulfil this role in line with the legal structures in their own countries.
Partner	Organizations cooperating with DBN and DBN members in work for the benefit of the poor, in particular of marginalized children and youth in developing countries
Safeguarding	taking measures to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of individuals, which allow people, especially Children, Young Adults and Vulnerable Persons to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

4. Statement

In agreement to DBN Mission statement: ***Youth at the heart of development!*** we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with DBN members and all relevant stakeholders to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. In the spirit of **Preventive System** of St John Bosco DBN/DBN staff and volunteers have strong commitment to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

DBN and all its members commit themselves to observe the principles expressed above. Every DBN member has Child Safeguarding Policy in place in compliance to their relevant country legislation and international child safeguarding standards¹.

¹ Further information on international child safeguarding standards

www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

5. International context

DBN as a Global network operates in the framework of International Child Safeguarding Standards. DBN recognises that abuse of power has led, and continues to lead, to many forms of exploitation and abuse. In the environment in which DBN, DBN members and partners work, people can experience disempowerment due to a variety of factors. This can give rise to a power differential between the members of target communities and those directly or indirectly involved in delivering development programmes, namely DBN, DBN members staff and the staff of partner organisations. We acknowledge that the potential exists for those who work with programme participants and partners to abuse their position of power. Examples include, but are not limited to, soliciting of payments, requests for sexual favours, intimidation or threats of violence, including sexual violence.

DBN recognises that there are specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks that exist for children and is committed to make every effort to ensure children are safe and protected in its international programme work. DBN's aim is to ensure that it operates best practice in terms of child safeguarding policies and recognises the legal guidelines governing protection in each jurisdiction in which it works.

6. Guiding Documents and Principles

Our approach to child safeguarding work is guided by a number of key international principles and standards as set out in the following: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and in the national laws of the countries in which DBN, DBN members and partners work. We also aim to uphold the commitments made under the "Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN personnel" and the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (PSEA) (ST/SGB/2003/13)¹. These commitments prioritise key actions, including practical measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and to ensure an effective response when such acts occur.

The UNCRC is ratified in 193 states (except Somalia, South Sudan and the United States) The four general principles of the UNCRC are:

1. Survival and development,
2. Non-discrimination,
3. Child participation and the right to be heard,
4. Best interests of the child.

Of the 54 articles contained within the UNCRC, the most relevant statements to the current policy are detailed below:

Article 2: Children have the right to protection against discrimination.

Article 3: All adults should always do what is best for a child.

Article 12: Children have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.

Article 19: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

Where children are the main target population of a partner's activities, or form a substantial proportion of the target population, DBN and DBN members staff should discuss the specific child safeguarding provisions that need to be put in place with the partner. These provisions should be rights-based, taking into account the provisions of the UNCRC and of rights enshrined in national legislation. Specialist agencies working locally should be consulted to ensure that the most relevant safeguarding practices are adopted.

7. DBN Reporting procedures

DBN staff is based in countries where DBN members are present and work in direct agreement with the DBN member in a particular country. **DBN staff, volunteers and DBN Board Members are a subject to DBN member Child Safeguarding Policy and Civil Authority in a particular country. In case of an allegation of child abuse or SEA against DBN staff, volunteer or a Board Member relevant DBN member Reporting Procedures in particular country will apply and DBN President has to be informed to take action according to DBN Bylaws and Internal Regulations.** The President is a legal representative of Don Bosco Network and serves as Child Safeguarding Manager for DBN (this task can be delegated by him and DBN Board to another DBN Board Member or DBN staff). In case of an allegation against the DBN President, the DBN Vice President or in his absence the eldest Board Member must be informed to take action according to DBN Bylaws and Internal Regulations.

8. Summary Safeguarding Guidelines for Don Bosco Network Partners

The safety of vulnerable people is paramount. To help partners act on their obligations to manage risks towards children and vulnerable adults², DBN has adopted a set of safeguarding compliance standards. These standards are based on the work of *"Keeping Children Safe"*, a global organisation that works to keep the world's most vulnerable children safe from abuse and exploitation.

² A child is anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives. A vulnerable adult is a person, 18 or above, who, by reason of disability, age or illness, the context they are in or as a result of social and other inequalities, is or may be unable to take care of or to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The ***Keeping Children Safe*** standards are aimed at organisations worldwide, their partners and associates. They provide a basis for determining local standards and how these will be met and measured. The standards may be applied to situations that concern not only children, but all vulnerable people. Four main categories of safeguarding standards have been defined: policy, people, procedures and accountability. In each category DBN requires its partners to have put in place the following minimum standards:

a. Policy

The partner organisation:

- » has a written policy that describes how it is committed to preventing, and responding appropriately to harm to children and vulnerable adults
- » openly communicates a lack of tolerance towards abuse
- » commits to preventing a person from working with children and/or vulnerable people if this poses an unacceptable risk.

b. People

The partner organisation:

- » places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them in understanding and acting in line with these
- » provides safeguarding training for personnel, contractors, volunteers, board members, etc.
- » has a safeguarding code of conduct
- » has robust recruitment-screening processes
- » has employment contracts containing provisions for dismissal, suspension or transfer to other duties for any employee who breaches the safeguarding code of conduct.

c. Procedures

The partner organisation:

- » creates a safe environment by implementing safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation
- » has procedures that enable staff, volunteers, board members, beneficiaries and others to report any safeguarding concerns and take action
- » undertakes a risk assessment that covers its supported activities.

d. Accountability

The partner organisation:

- » monitors and regularly (at least once every three years) reviews its safeguarding measures
- » has a dedicated person within its organisation responsible for safeguarding
- » has governance mechanisms (such as a key board member for safeguarding) to enforce and review its safeguarding policy. DBN expects all partners working with children and vulnerable groups to meet the standards set in all four categories. DBN reserves the right to terminate agreements or relationships with any partner in the event of violation or non-compliance with safeguarding policies. In some cases, partners may be supported in developing and implementing their own safeguarding policies.

This Safeguarding Statement was approved by Don Bosco Network General Assembly on the 28.09.2020 and updated on the 05.10.2021. It will be reviewed during the DBN General Assembly at least every 3 years.

Disclaimer

The document will be translated in French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian.

In the event of any ambiguity about the meaning of certain translated terms or of any discrepancies between the English version of 'DBN Safeguarding Statement' and the translated versions in Spanish, Italian, German and French, the English copy shall prevail.