

# RET INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Protecting Through Education



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# 1. Introduction

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The present RET International Global Children and Youth Safeguarding Policy aims to define an overarching institutional framework to safeguard children and young people with which the organisation comes into contact with (directly or indirectly) when implementing projects or institutional initiatives and events. In this regard, RET is fully committed to protect, respect and uphold children' and youth' integrity and rights. We particularly refer here to protecting children and youth from any form of harmful practice, behaviour and/or abuse and violence against them that could occur within the timeframe and the context of project activities implemented by RET, or within RET's presence in a given country/locality.

This Global Policy covers all participants of RET project considered a child or a young person up to 24 years old.

Because RET specific focus is on young people living in fragile and/or crisis related contexts, the protective scope of this Global Policy also extends to them. We specifically refer to youth who are directly supported by activities of RET projects, or those with whom RET is in contact with through RET youth initiatives, such as the Youth Ambassador Programme. Indeed, RET acknowledges that youth have specific safeguarding needs different from the ones of children, which require different responses.

Moreover, this Global Policy pays special attention to safeguarding concerns and needs of girls and young women. We recognise that girls and young women may be particularly vulnerable and at risk of certain forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.

Therefore, RET commits to ensure that this safeguarding policy and its related concrete safeguarding commitments, applicable at field, national, regional and/or HQ levels, are gender and age responsive.

Any type of violence, abuse, exploitation, and /or manipulation against children, adolescents and young people, both female and male is not only against the values and principles we uphold, as described in this Global Policy, but also in direct opposition to the aims of RET's work in every country and every region where we operate.

## 2. Purpose

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Every single individual working for and with RET has the obligation to safeguard children and young people from any type of violence. They must therefore apply the “do not harm” principle and should engage positively with children and young people in ways that enhance the materialisation of this Policy at their level. To this end, the purpose of this Global Policy is to ensure that:

- All who work for and engage with RET have gained good understanding of, and are prepared to respect, apply and advance this Global Policy.
- RET has developed, disseminated and put in place procedures to prevent and address any situation/action/behaviour that result in harming a child or young person, or which may expose them to risks of physical, emotional or moral harm.
- All children and young people RET works with are well aware/informed of the institutional responsibility to protect them (preventing and responding) from any form of harm against them arising from activities, behaviours or attitudes from RET staff, project's visitors, interns, Board Members or any other institutional or project related individual. This also includes understanding how to timely access the (internal or external) mechanisms for reporting such incidents.

## 3. RET Policy Statement & Commitments

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RET is committed to working in emergencies and fragile environments around the world to ensure the protection and resilience of vulnerable young people and women through education. In this regard, RET is committed to ensure the best interest, the wellbeing and a healthier development of all children and young people benefiting from RET projects, events and initiatives. In this sense,

every child or youth who comes into contact with RET through its projects and implemented/planned activities, must be protected to the best of RET's abilities from any involuntary or voluntary action susceptible of leading to any type of child/youth (sexual, physical, emotional or moral) exploitation, abuse or violence. This obligation falls upon all of RET's staff, related personnel or board members.

RET is engaged to fully respect and protect every child's and youth's rights, integrity and dignity, preventing, and if needed responding to, any attempt against them. This is in line with the Core Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as, the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention of the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup>.

RET is therefore fully committed to the gender and age responsive safeguarding of all children and young people from all forms of violence and harm within the framework of RET implemented projects, events or initiatives.

RET fosters child and youth safe interventions, approaches, and environments which explicitly consider their safeguarding needs, the differential gender and age concerns, and its related protection risks. In addition, RET supports the involvement of children and young people in their own protection, including in the prevention of at-risks practices or behaviours that might expose them to any sort of harm.

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<sup>1</sup> Acknowledging that there is any specific set of internationally recognised and youth specific Rights, their rights are implicitly covered by the Conventions listed here.

RET does not tolerate any inequality, discrimination or segregation inducing behaviours, attitudes or decisions from its staff, associates, invitees or board members.

## 4. RET's Global Principles and Commitments to Safeguard Children and Youth

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Fragile and crisis-related environments, including those affected by disasters, exacerbate the protection risks to which children and young people are exposed daily. In these contexts, children and youth might be killed or injured, separated from their families and relatives, forced into marriage, exposed to gender-based violence, forced to work, very often under hazardous conditions, while others are forcibly recruited by armed groups/forces, militias, violent and extremist groups, gangs or criminal units. Most of them have been witnessing dramatic situations caused by war, the forced displacement, the destruction of their homes and living environment, the loss of beloved ones. All of this has a devastating impact on their well-being, their sense of confidence and safety, as well as on their development and future.

Based on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Principles and Approaches advanced by the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, and considering the Doha Youth Declaration on Reshaping the Humanitarian Agenda, the Global Refugee Youth Consultations' Recommendations, the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth peace and security, and on the commitments/actions from the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, this RET Global Children and Youth Safeguarding Policy is guided by the following principles and Institutional Commitments:

### Overall RET Principles

**4.1.** RET works under the **legal** framework of the concerned country of operation and in the respect of international laws and policies that promote the safeguarding of children and youth.

**4.2.** All children and young people have **equal rights to protection**, to be empowered and to benefit from a healthy development process in a protective and friendly environment.

**4.3.** All children and young people have **the right to actively participate in endeavours affecting their lives and be timely informed and supported** to take sound decisions in their best interest and to ensure their well-being. In circumstances when decisions cannot be taken with their participation, RET will give full consideration to how such decisions will affect them. Children and youth will be encouraged to express their opinions and preferences, and this will be given “due weight” in accordance with their age and level of maturity.

**4.4.** All children and young people have **the right to fulfil their potential** by accessing and completing quality and relevant education and training programmes leading to self-sufficiency, self-determination and the accomplishment of their prospects.

**4.5.** All children and youth have **equal human rights** and the right to fulfil them, irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, any history of conflict with the law or any other aspect of their background or identity.

**4.6.** All actions to safeguard the **protection of children and youth should be based on their best interest** and be aligned with the principle of “do not harm”.

## RET Specific Commitments

**4.7.** Every **RET staff, associate, board member and other related stakeholders is aware of his/her obligations** with regard to the protection of children and young people, **and is obligated to respect and apply this Global Policy**. The detection and assessment of any potential harm to children and youth, whether through abuses (including sexual), violence, discrimination, and/or exploitation, a priority to be investigated and addressed. RET staff, associates or Board Members will never abuse the position of trust that is associated with their relationship with RET.

**4.8. RET has a particular responsibility to every child and youth with whom it comes into contact.** None of these children and youth should suffer from any intentional or unintentional harm as a result of their engagement with or exposure to RET activities, initiatives or events.

**4.9. RET commits to disseminate this global policy** by thoroughly informing, and training, its staff, associates, interns, consultants, Board Members and any other person in contact with children and youth under the framework of RET projects, initiatives and events. **Moreover, it also commits to mainstream this global policy into every project, programme, organised event/initiative, from its design up to its implementation and evaluation in every context of intervention,** ensuring that RET actions do no harm to children and young people, and that everyone **creates and maintains a safe and protective environment** for children and youth.

**4.10.** Every RET country office **assesses timely and efficiently the protection risks to which children and youth** in the areas of intervention of RET **might be exposed** to, and put in place all measures to mitigate them and reduce any potential negative impact on the safeguarding of these children and youth.

**4.11.** RET ensures at all levels that appropriate, confidential, accessible, cultural, gender and age sensitive internal **safeguarding mechanisms** are in place to allow children, youth and any other party to denunciate and look for help if a child or a young person has been affected by any kind of harmful practice.

**4.12.** RET takes **specific measures to address gender and identity bias,** discrimination and violence which might arise as a result of it, and pays special attention to ensure gender equality and equity, and girls/young women active engagement in their safeguarding process.

**4.13.** All reports and concerns with regard to **the safety and protection of a child or youth are taken seriously by RET,** and when necessary, rapid actions will be taken to protect the child/youth and to initiate actions against the perpetrator. This might include referral to legal (law enforcement), medical, and or psychological services/entities. Moreover, if there would be allegations

against a RET related individual, such as a staff member, it can lead to the suspension or termination of the contract or collaboration, as per RET's policies and procedures, as well as referral of the case to appropriate judiciary authorities.

**4.14. RET enforces the confidentiality of all information** concerning issues affecting child/youth protection and does not disclose any sensitive or personal information unless absolutely required for the sake of protecting the concerned child/youth and under the respect of his/her best interest. For example, when a case is referred to a specialised service or to the justice to undertake actions to protect the affected child/youth.

**4.15.** RET acknowledges that **there is no single way to properly address issues related to safeguarding children and youth and to promote their rights.** The proposed responses should be adapted to the specific cultural context from which the child/youth is coming from. Nevertheless, cultural belonging should never be considered a justification to any type of harmful practice, behaviour or attitude against a child or young person.

**4.16.** RET acknowledges **the need to collaborate with other agencies, family and community members, as well as stakeholders at local, national and international levels** to promote and ensure the safeguard of all children and youth, particularly of those made vulnerable by crisis, conflict, forced displacement, natural disasters and violent environments.

**4.17.** Although most often safeguarding issues are related to the misconduct of an adult, it can also happen from one child to another, from a youth to another. This is materialised when the power relationship amongst both parties is out of balance and leads to abuses from one to another (within the child soldier or forced child labour contexts, in school, etc.). This is normally referred to as “**bullying**”. In this scenario, **RET is committed to protect the child/youth being bullied, while also considering actions to address the child/youth who is the perpetrator of such abuse of power/violent practice.** Interventions should focus on the best interest of each party.

**4.18. RET is committed to engaging children and youth** participating in its different projects/activities/initiatives/events **to become familiar with this**

**global safeguarding policy**, opening opportunities for them to improve it and to develop specific measures that enforce its application and dissemination in each concerned context.

**4.19.** RET is committed **to only recruit** staff and collaborate with professionals, stakeholders, community members, etc. **who commit to respect and apply the principles embedded in this Global Children and Youth Safeguarding Policy.**

**4.20.** RET commits to be **held accountable for the respect and proper application of this Global Children and Youth Safeguarding Policy**, and it commits to revise it and improve it based on staff, field related stakeholders, project's participants' inputs and experts feedback, whenever circumstances call for a revision, but not later than every three years.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities in the Application of RET's Global Children & Youth Safeguarding Policy (GC&YSP)

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**5.1. Training and Awareness Raising of RET Staff:** Each newly recruited staff member on all levels (field and HQ) has to participate in a thorough induction about the RET's Code of Conduct (CoC), RET's Children & Youth Safeguarding Global Policy (GC&YSP), and RET's Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Action Plan, before signing his/her Terms of Employment. The induction will be facilitated by a senior staff, who will be able to answer the participants' questions. The induction must lead to the signature of the RET's CoC, PSEA Action Plan, and the present Global Policy by the new RET employee. These documents will have been read, explained and approved during the induction. Every new programme/project, all the RET staff members have to participate in training session about the Global Policy at the country and/or regional level. The aim of this session is to recall the RET's CoC, PSEA Action Plan, and the Global Policy and enhance the staff members' understanding of Children & Youth Safeguarding issues and RET's protection mechanism. It will also provide an opportunity for staff to share experiences, and for protection mechanisms to be adjusted, when considered necessary. To

plan and carry out the training, HQ's Head of Operations shall receive a timetable from each Head of Country (e.g. Country Director or Programme Manager) at the beginning of the year, indicating when, where and how the training will be held. In addition, each of RET's country teams has to include in its training session updated material (reports, guidebooks, local and international legislation) in line with a human rights approach to Children & Youth Safeguarding and PSEA. This material will be shared with the RET International Headquarters (HQ) office annually. At the end of each annual in-country training, the Head of Country will send a training report to HQ, which will include content, duration, place, list of participants, name of trainers and a summary of the discussions and measures to be taken. These reports will be openly available from HQ to all concerned / interested parties. In case of amendments to RET's CoC, PSEA Action Plan and the present Global Policy, a special training will be held with all the RET staff members. Each staff member will then be asked to sign the amended document.

#### **5.2. Awareness Raising and Compliance with the Global Policy of All Parties:**

All RET International HQ, regional and country organisations and staff, project's visitors, implementing partners, organisations that work with RET in carrying out RET's programmes, projects, processes, events and/or activities, interns, Board Members or any other institutional or project related individuals shall be aware of and adhere to the provisions of the RET's Children & Youth Safeguarding Global Policy. They shall;

- commit and contribute to an environment where children and young people feel respected, supported, safe and protected;
- never act or behave in a manner that results in violence against a child or young person or places a child or young person at risk of violence;
- support and develop systems which maintains an environment which is safe for and prevents violence against children and young people;
- be accountable for ensuring that the policy is fully embedded within their areas of responsibility; and
- comply with the RET's Global Children & Youth Safeguarding Policy as they apply to their context, the people (Staff, Associates, and Visitors), children and young people with whom they engage, as well as the processes, programmes, projects, events and activities they undertake.

When RET works with an Implementing Partner (IP), the Code of Conduct must be an integral part of the signed working agreement between the RET and its IP. According to the signed agreement, the IP will have the overall responsibility to enforce the RET's Code of Conduct, including the RET's Children & Youth Safeguarding Global Policy and the PSEA Action Plan, and train its staff accordingly.

**5.3. Training and Awareness Raising of Children, Young People and Communities:** Children, young people and communities with which RET engage, work or are in contact with are made aware of the provisions of this Global Policy to ensure they have the confidence and ability to report any incidents occurring against children and young people.

**5.4. Monitoring Compliance & Auditing:** RET shall monitor compliance with this Global Policy in all its country organisations through tracking and auditing procedures. Auditing against this Global Policy will be led by RET's compliance office / audit department by following RET's related Auditing Policies and Procedures.

**5.5. Reporting of Misconducts or Acts Contrary to the Provisions of this Global Policy:** All RET staff must report internally any concerns, including both specific complaints and rumours, regarding possible misconduct or acting contrary to the provisions of this Global Policy by a RET staff and/or other external persons. Failure to report information through the proper channel should result in disciplinary action. Complaints should be reported, even when the institutional affiliation of the perpetrator is unknown. The complaint must be reported directly to the "Children & Youth Safeguarding" focal point together with the Human Resources department. The RET "Children & Youth Safeguarding" focal point in the field is the Head of Country/Country Director. The Area/Regional "Children & Youth Safeguarding" focal point is the Area/Regional Director. The RET "Children & Youth Safeguarding" focal point in HQ is the Chief Operations Officer (COO). The field focal point must report the complaint to the Area/Regional focal point, which in turn must report to the HQ focal point (the COO) and to the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the CEO. If the complainant believes this reporting route to be compromised - for example

that s/he would be victimised, or if s/he has no confidence in the local management structure, or when the focal point itself has been accused-, then the complaint should be raised directly with another RET focal point at the regional or HQ level. It is suggested that the complaint should be recorded, either verbally or written. The complaint is strictly confidential. The primary focal point must ensure that the individual who makes a complaint is informed of the confidentiality of the process. The focal point must obtain a written consent from the complainant for the information to be made available to others outside the complaint-reporting mechanism. The primary focal point must immediately take all necessary and appropriate measures to ensure that the safety of the complainant is guaranteed (for example via a change in working arrangements, or a temporary suspension). Staff members should be reassured that there will be no action taken against any member of staff who reports in good faith information indicating a violation of the RET's Code of Conduct, which includes this Global Children & Youth Safeguarding Policy, and which, following investigation, proves unfounded. However, if a staff member knowingly and wilfully reports false or malicious information regarding another member of staff, such false reports will lead to disciplinary action.

**5.6. Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms:** Awareness-raising regarding the RET's Children & Youth Safeguarding Global Policy among communities where RET works is a priority and must be an integral part of each RET programme. During the whole project implementation process, RET staff members have to be particularly vigilant to any sign or evidence of misconduct and breach coming from the community, where they work, and immediately report any case to their superior. On the occasion of field visits or M&E missions, RET staff members have to set up meetings with different stakeholders of the communities involved in RET's programme to inform them about RET's Children & Youth Safeguarding Global Policy and to specifically address safeguarding issues of children and youth. The meetings should be led by RET staff members of both genders to allow beneficiaries to talk to a person of the same sex and reduce obstacles to report acts of misconduct and breach, respecting discretion and confidentiality. In each project location, RET will be in permanent contact with other organisations and NGOs working in the field of psychosocial support of the target population or legal institutions to be

informed about cases regarding its staff. In the framework of each RET programme, a Child/Youth Protection focal point will be designated in each project location where refugees can report Children & Youth Safeguarding cases. Once received the complaint must follow the same reporting mechanism, as described in the previous subparagraph of this Policy.

**5.7. Investigation:** Once the complaint is received, together with the Chief of Staff (CoS), the HQ focal point (COO) will consider the appropriate steps to take, including the initiation of an investigation. Any investigation that is undertaken must be completed, regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator is still a RET staff member. In the event that a complaint does not warrant a full investigation, the Head of Country may nonetheless be asked to take a number of steps to address concerns in other ways (for example, addressing any poor practice with additional training, adjusting working arrangements or procedures). If the complaint involves staff of other UN agencies, NGO partners, military personnel or non-staff personnel, such agencies must be informed of the complaint, via appropriate mechanisms. The investigation of complaints will be conducted by following the procedures, guidelines and instructions of the RET's Human Resources Policies and Procedures (Chapter 8: Grievance Handling, Appointment of Investigator & Investigation Guidelines), with due regard to a number of key principles, including, but not limited to, confidentiality, safety, impartiality, objectivity, thoroughness, timeliness and accuracy, as well as safeguarding the due process rights of the alleged perpetrator. All individuals concerned, including the subject of the complaint, have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation. The Chief of Staff (CoS) and the HQ focal point (COO) will designate a senior member of staff or focal point to assume responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of the investigation. The designated senior member of staff or focal point will be responsible for ensuring that an investigation is undertaken according to the principles of confidentiality, safety, impartiality, objectivity, thoroughness, timeliness and accuracy. The general principle of confidentiality is such that the disclosure of the identity of complainants, witnesses, victims/survivors, the subject of the complaint and any others involved in an investigation, is restricted and is permitted only on an authorised or "need to know" basis, and only in certain

exceptional circumstances. A breach of confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action. Interviews must be conducted in a safe and supportive environment and in accordance with the principles of RET's Human Resources Policies and Procedures and good practice. Witnesses will always be interviewed in the language of his/her choice. If an interpreter is needed, s/he will follow strict rules of confidentiality. Once the investigation is completed, the investigator must deliver a full written report, which includes conclusions and recommendations. The report must be produced in an appropriate time-frame.

## 6. Sanctions

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The investigation report must be submitted to the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the HQ focal point, who will, in consultation with the CEO, decide upon an appropriate course of action.

Should the investigation indicate that misconduct has not occurred, the case will be closed. In such a case, if a legitimate concern about the suspected abuse of a child or young person was raised but proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of malicious accusations.

Should the investigation indicate that misconduct has committed by RET's staff, disciplinary action must be taken, including possible summarily warning, fines, withholding increments, demotion, suspension, discharge and dismissal, pursuant to RET's Human Resources Policies and Procedures.

If, after proper investigation, there is evidence to support allegations of any type of child/youth (sexual, physical, emotional or moral) exploitation, abuse or violence, which may contravene national laws, in consultation with the complainant, these cases may, upon consultation with the appropriate internal legal advisors, be referred to national authorities for criminal prosecution.

Breaches may incur sanctions including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements, and where relevant, official

complaint to the related authorities and to the associated organisation(s) of the person of interest in case the breaches were committed by external individuals who are not RET's staff.

## 7. Media & Communication

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All RET International staff involved in the production, use and publication of any form of communications materials must abide by the procedures outlined in the "RET International Institutional Communications Manual" with the explicit aim to guarantee both the consent and security of any and all beneficiaries featuring in these materials. Furthermore, specific attention must be given when the material produced features names, stories and images of children and youth. Whenever a beneficiary is under the age of 18, both the individuals concerned and their parents/caregivers must, without exception, be involved in, and agree to, the decision to use their name, story or image. The security of such material and dignity of the child or youth is, in addition, independently assessed and deemed to be safe (in accordance with the principles and commitments outlined in chapter 4 of this policy) by the relevant RET Country Director, before it is published in any form. RET Headquarters offer support to such decisions, should there be any doubt.

In accordance with RET International's Operational Communications Policy, operational communications - defined as the sharing of information by RET staff, internally and externally, for the conduct of daily business - must never contain discriminatory, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful content. This concerns any message that is designed to be, or could reasonably be construed as, bullying or harassment or which is sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, pornographic or paedophilic in nature. If this is valid for all operational communications, investigations for operational communications targeting children and youth will be considered a priority and, if confirmed, disciplinary measures will be applied as swiftly and severely as RET International's procedures allow.

## 8. Definitions

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### (Child) Abuse

RET aligns to WHO's definition of Child abuse, which is applicable to young people as well.

It refers to all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the individual or child's /youth's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. ([WHO](#))

### Adolescence

Adolescence is a period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood. In RET it is defined as the period from around ages 12 to 18, but there is no consensus on this definition and it is not universal. While age is a convenient way to define adolescence, it is only one characteristic that delineates this period. It is an appropriate basis to measure biological changes, but it does not capture the social transitions of adolescence, which vary across different socio-cultural environments.

Adolescence represents one of the critical transitions in the life span and is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change that is second only to that of infancy. Biological processes drive many aspects of this growth and development, with the onset of puberty marking the passage from childhood to adolescence. This definition is based on [WHO](#)

### Child Soldier/Children Associated with an Armed force or Armed Group

A child soldier is any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys, and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters,

messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities. ([Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups, 2007](#))

## Child Labour

RET aligns with the IOM definition, which considers that “Child Labour” is any work performed by a child which is detrimental to his/her health, education, physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. ([IOM](#)) A child is understood as all individuals under the legal age of majority. This is defined by each country’s legal system.

## Child Protection

Child protection is the prevention and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Thus, child protection is not the protection of all children’s rights, but refers instead to a subset of these rights. ([Minimum Standards for Child Protection](#))

For RET, the above definition is also applicable to young people whom whom RET interacts in different fragile and crisis related contexts.

## Child/Children

Article 1 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. Minors are considered unable to evaluate and understand the consequences of their choices and give informed consent, especially for sexual acts. ([Global Protection Cluster/IASC](#))

## Children’s Rights

Rights established under the [UN Convention of the Rights of the Child](#). The guiding principles of the Convention are non-discrimination, adherence to the

best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and the right to participate. ([UNICEF](#))

## (Forced) Displacement

Forcible or voluntary uprooting of persons from their homes by violent conflicts, violations of human rights and other traumatic events, or threats thereof. Persons who remain within the borders of their own country are known as Internally Displaced Persons. Persons who are forced to flee outside the borders of their state of nationality or residence for reasons based on a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds identified in the 1951 Refugee Convention or to flee conflict in the case of States Parties to the 1969 OAU Convention or 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees are known as refugees. ([OCHA](#))

## “Do No Harm” Principle

“Do No Harm” is an approach which helps to identify unintended negative or positive impacts of humanitarian and development interventions in settings where there is conflict or risk of conflict. It can be applied during planning, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that the intervention does not worsen the conflict but rather contributes to improving it. “Do No Harm” is considered an essential basis for the work of organisations operating in situations of conflict. ([INEE / Global Protection Cluster](#)).

## Forced / Early Marriage

Forced marriage is the marriage of an individual against her or his will. Child/early marriage is a formal marriage or informal union before age 18. Even though some countries permit marriage before age 18, international human rights standards classify these as child marriages, reasoning that those under age 18 are unable to give informed consent. Therefore, child marriage is a form of forced marriage as children are not legally competent to agree to such unions. ([IASC/Global Protection Cluster](#))

## Forced / Early Pregnancy

Forced pregnancy is the practice of forcing a woman or girl to become pregnant, often as part of an early and/or forced marriage.

## Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other Types of Categorised Violence

This is an umbrella term for any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences. The term GBV highlights the gender dimension of these types of acts; for example, the relationship between women's status in society and their increased vulnerability. Men and boys are also victims of GBV, especially sexual violence. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include the following:

- Sexual violence: sexual exploitation/abuse, forced prostitution, forced/child marriage;
- Domestic/family violence: physical, emotional/psychological and sexual violence within the family/home; and
- Harmful cultural/traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honour killings, widow inheritance, and others. ([Sphere Project](#))

## Harm

Harm refers to physical and mental injury or physical or emotional suffering. ([OHCHR](#))

## Harmful Traditional Practices

Cultural, social and religious customs and traditions that can be harmful to a person's mental or physical health. Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as women. These harmful traditional practices include female genital mutilation (FGM); forced feeding of women; child marriage; the various taboos or practices that prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos and

traditional birth practices; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; and dowry price. ([OHCHR](#))

## Partners

The term partners refers to those who are contractually engaged with RET, and as such comply with RET's Child Safeguarding Policy.

## Prevention of Violent Extremism

Prevention of violent extremism through education seeks to strengthen the capacities of national education systems (e.g. policies, teachers, educational contents) to appropriately and effectively contribute to national prevention efforts. This includes equipping learners, of all ages, and notably young women and men, with the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours, which foster responsible global citizenship, critical thinking, empathy and the ability to take action against violent extremism. ([UNESCO](#))

## Protection of girls and women

Protection of women and girls aims to prevent and respond to the impact of all categories of gender-based violence (GBV) in women's life, may they be sexual, symbolic, economic, psychological or social. Programmes engaging in this field must provide training and information to young women on how to be self-reliant, gain confidence, understand their rights and know where to get support, as well as how to overcome situations of discrimination/exclusion at individual, social, economic and/or political levels. (RET definition)

## Protection Risks

Protection refers to all activities that aim to obtain full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with international law ([OHCHR](#)). There are a number of factors that may put at risk such protection, that are influenced by age, gender and other diversity factors, which can be exacerbated by a crisis, especially when forced displacement occurs. ([IASC](#))

## Staff

The term staff refers to anyone who works for or on behalf of RET, whether as a staff member, consultant, intern or volunteer, in full- or part-time capacity.

## Youth and Adolescents

Youth is usually defined as people between 15 and 24 years. However, youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. Adolescents are people between, roughly, the ages of 10 and 19 (see definition 'adolescence'). Together they form the largest category of young people, those aged between 10 and 24 years. The end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood vary. Within a country or culture, there can be different ages at which an individual is considered to be mature enough to be entrusted by society with certain tasks. In emergency situations, adolescents & youth have needs that are different from those of younger children and adults. Youth refers to a period of progression towards independent responsibility. Definitions vary from one context to another depending on socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors. ([INEE](#))

## 9. Annexes

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### RET International Code of Conduct

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/059jrc7po7t6zo2/RET International Code of Conduct September ENG.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/059jrc7po7t6zo2/RET_International_Code_of_Conduct_September_ENG.pdf?dl=0)

### RET International Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/bz24a2zp2dy3rrx/RET International Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Action Plan September 2014 ENG.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/bz24a2zp2dy3rrx/RET_International_Protection_from_Sexual_Exploitation_and_Abuse_Action_Plan_September_2014_ENG.pdf?dl=0)



## RET International Operational Communications Policy

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/i143h8rklww3nlv/RET\\_International\\_Operational\\_Communications\\_Policy\\_ENG.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/i143h8rklww3nlv/RET_International_Operational_Communications_Policy_ENG.pdf?dl=0)

## RET International Institutional Communications Manual

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wdruplq03ny0kxi/RET%20International%20-%20Institutional%20Communications%20Manual%202017.pdf?dl=0>