



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE CHILD SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

Introduction

The purpose of the following ethical guidelines is to establish common principles of operating for Finnish child sponsorship organisations, which enhance the fundamental rights of children and place an emphasis on the respect mental and physical inviolability of children in child sponsorship operations. With this Code of Conduct the undersigned Finnish child sponsorship organisations wish to enhance the formation of relationships between the sponsors and children which are based on respect towards the child. The following guidelines concern the personnel, sponsors and volunteers of Finnish child sponsorship organisations, as well as all others in contact with children through our child sponsorship programmes.

Basis for sponsorship operations

The basis for all child sponsorship activities is the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which all sponsorship organisations bind to. Article 3 of the agreement states "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration." Practically every nation in the World has signed the convention, but the rights of children are continually breached. For example, the use of children as soldiers, child prostitutes, or child labour in drug crime ruins the child's mental and physical development.

Child sponsorship is one form of carrying out development cooperation. The primary objective of child sponsorship is to take into special consideration the situation and rights of children in Finland as well as in cooperation countries.

Guidelines for operations

The undersigned organisations have committed to the following principles in their operations:

1. The objective of child sponsorship programmes is to improve the entire living environment of a child. This is the best method of helping the individual child as well.
2. An essential aspect of child sponsorship is the sponsor's possibility for communication with the sponsor child or programme. However, it is important to remember that in sponsor relationships the children are primarily members of their own communities and families. The children live in poor conditions and therefore, it is important that a child does not acquire a special status because of sponsorship donations. Such situations easily stir up envy amongst other children and such situations at worst cause social confinement of the child and/or his/her entire family. Because of this factor child sponsorship organisations have certain basic regulations and recommendations on sponsors giving the children gifts and on the correspondence between sponsors and children. Child sponsorship organisations have an obligation to monitor the implementation of these regulations and recommendations.
3. Similar regulations are also set for financial aid of individual children, especially in situations where a child receives monetary aid.
4. Since the child sponsorship organisations are held liable in matters concerning correspondence and communication, all correspondence between the sponsor and child is sent through the child sponsorship organisation or a local cooperation partner. In order to



ensure the best interests and inviolability of the sponsor children, the sponsorship organisations do not provide the sponsors with contact information regarding the children nor the children or their families contact information regarding the sponsors without the consent of all parties involved.

5. Physical violation of a child is considered the severest act of harming the rights of a child (Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 19). Therefore, special emphasis is placed on the selection of employees, interns, volunteers, and administrative representatives involved in child sponsorship operations in order to prevent the possibility of abuse of children in all situations.

In cases of sponsors visiting child sponsorship locations the following ethical guidelines are to be taken into consideration:

1. The sponsorship organisation operating in Finland is to be informed of possible sponsor visits well in advance.
2. In order to ensure the safety of the sponsor and the sponsorship child, the sponsors are not allowed to arrange visits on their own. All visits are to be arranged with the local organisation.

Through these measures sponsorship organisations strive to protect the mental and physical stability of the children within the sponsorship programmes, as well as the social structures of their communities. When dealing with sponsor relationships it is important to take into consideration cultural diversity and differences in world views.

Sponsorship organisations work in cooperation and commit to the fulfilment of these principles.

The undersigned organisations are:

Fida International
Interpedia
Nakurun lapset ry
Patmos
Pelastakaa Lapset ry – Save the Children Finland
Plan Suomi Säätiö – Plan Finland
Suomen Lähetysseura
Suomen World Vision – World Vision Finland
Yhteiset lapsemme