



CARE USA Organizational Policy Regarding Working Children and Hazardous Child Labor

As an organization dedicated to eradicating poverty and supporting people's efforts to help themselves, CARE frequently works with children¹ in a meaningful manner. CARE believes it is important to seek out children's voices in matters concerning their futures while upholding their internationally agreed upon rights. CARE USA is guided by the international commitments made by the world on behalf of children. Accordingly, CARE works to ensure that children's rights are respected, that children are consulted regarding their own development, and that children are seen as partners in the fight against global poverty. In doing so, CARE fosters an enabling environment that supports international doctrines including the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Labor Organization's Conventions No. 182 and 138, and national legal instruments concerning the welfare of children engaged in economic activity. Building upon these initiatives and CARE's existing *Guidelines for Involving Children in Advocacy and Public Relations* (ALMIS No. 5817), CARE USA has developed the following *Organizational Policy Regarding Working Children and Hazardous Child Labor*. CARE deems this policy vital to guide programming that involves children in ethical, humane ways and that guarantees that children's mental, educational, physical and moral development are not jeopardized.

CARE's Position on Child Labor

There are numerous factors, both economic and cultural, that influence the decision families and children make regarding children entering into the labor market. CARE supports the rights of families and working children to be agents of change in the fight against global poverty while respecting the values of all cultures within our work. CARE recognizes that child labor exists along a continuum. Developmentally appropriate economic activity can be beneficial to the full development of the child; but at its extreme, work can place a child's life and well-being at risk. CARE recognizes that child labor must be seen within this context, and has developed our position to reflect such realities.

The Worst Forms of Child Labor

CARE firmly opposes the use of children in the worst forms of child labor as defined by the International Labor Organization Convention No. 182 and Recommendation 190. These include:

- (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

¹ In accordance and support of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, CARE defines the children as any person below the age of eighteen years of age.

(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Hazardous Child Labor

CARE is opposed to the use of child labor that is considered hazardous in nature. *CARE defines hazardous child labor as all forms of economic exploitation, remunerated or unremunerated, that are detrimental to a child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development and exclude or interfere with the possibility of continual school attendance at the normal pace for the child's age and/or development status.* Any form of economic activity in excess can be considered hazardous, which often makes defining clear lines of acceptability difficult.

Child Work

CARE supports the positive impact of working children's contributions as members of the family unit through light work, seasonal or part-time employment in specific activities that are developmentally appropriate, that do not compromise the mental, physical, moral or spiritual development of the child and that do not interfere, impede or restrict a child's right to a quality education. CARE recognizes the important role that children play in contributing to their families' economic welfare and the valuable contributions children make to their families' survival. CARE acknowledges that children often engage in economic activity that enables families to meet their basic household needs. Work can be beneficial to the cognitive development of a child and CARE recognizes and supports the role that work plays within a child's development.

Understanding the Unique Situation of the Girl Child: CARE also makes a commitment to addressing the unique challenges that girls face in the fight against the worst forms and hazardous child labor. CARE's commitment to women and girls serves as a focal point for our programming interventions. CARE recognizes that girls face unique gender-specific obstacles due to economic, cultural and social factors that often place them at greater risk within the labor market.

Child Labor Programming: CARE affirms our commitment to combating the abuses of children engaged in the worst forms and hazardous labor practices through our programming initiatives. CARE will work to build public awareness and enact policy reform, enhance relevant quality educational opportunities, improve the economic alternatives to child labor, and increase the capacity of those we work with to combat the worst forms and hazardous child labor.

Importance of Policy and Social Engagement: CARE is committed to working at the community, national, regional and international level to ensure these strategic programming focus areas contribute to CARE's overall mission of fighting global poverty. CARE believes that governments must make a concerted effort to enact and enforce all relevant child labor laws. CARE believes that communities around the world must not only hold their governments accountable but also hold their peers, civil societies, development partners, informal and private sectors, and themselves accountable for ensuring children's rights are respected and their opinions are valued and heard.

Strategic Outcomes of CARE's Work

CARE's primary goal is to contribute to and support the global effort to eradicate the worst forms of child labor. To achieve this goal in countries where CARE initiates programs targeting child laborers, CARE will work toward achieving the following results:

- Immediately remove children from the worst forms of child labor and mitigate children's participation in hazardous child labor;
- Quality and relevant education is recognized by all stakeholders, including children, families, communities, government and non-governmental officials, as a human right;
- Relevant quality educational opportunities, including skills training, are viewed by the communities in which we work as beneficial alternatives to the worst forms and hazardous child labor;
- Child laborers, those at risk of engaging in child labor, families, communities and society at large have a greater understanding of the negative consequences associated with the worst forms and hazardous child labor;
- Communities have an increased capacity to target the abuses of the worst forms and hazardous child labor within their local context;

- Families and communities have the opportunity to improve their economic and cultural well-being in order to improve their overall quality of life, especially as it relates to a child's participation and completion of an educational program; and
- Governments and local partners have an increased capacity to combat the issues associated with the worst forms and hazardous child labor through the development of realistic enforceable initiatives.

CARE wishes to be a partner of choice among all stakeholders in the fight to eradicate the worst forms of child labor and the abuses of hazardous child labor. CARE is committed to improving the lives of not only those directly engaged in child labor, but also of those families and communities that are deeply affected by this issue.

Accountability

In an effort to operationalize this policy into our programming and act consistently with our core values of being honest and transparent in our work, CARE must be accountable to this policy. We will hold ourselves accountable by carrying out the following:

- All current and future projects should remain consistent with the ideals set forth within this policy and incorporate this policy and its contents into programming design, implementation and monitoring activities;
- CARE's programming partners are aware of this policy and support the aims;
- This policy is specifically referenced within any future Memorandum of Understanding between CARE and any programming partner that works directly or indirectly in the field of child labor;
- CARE will develop effective communication outlets within all of our future child labor projects. This will enable the communities we serve to address their concerns, approaches and desired outcomes in targeting child labor, and to influence CARE's approach to effectively target the needs of those affected directly and indirectly by child labor;
- All future economic development projects incorporate this policy into programming frameworks;
- CARE will strive to incorporate statistics on child labor into monitoring and evaluation standards for economic development programming; and
- CARE's performance management system will include aspects of this policy in the individual operating plans of relevant staff in an effort to achieve the policy's strategic outcomes.