

## Diesis Network – Child Protection Policy

### 1. Introduction & Purpose

Diesis Network is fully committed to ensuring that all children and young people involved in the Youth 4 Development project are protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

This policy provides a clear operational framework for safeguarding children and youth in accordance with European and Belgian legislation and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

It establishes standards and procedures that all staff, partners, and stakeholders must follow to create safe, inclusive, and empowering environments for children and young people across all project activities.

### 2. Scope & Applicability

This policy applies to all individuals engaged in the Youth 4 Development project, including:

- Diesis Network employees, consultants, and interns
- Partner organizations and subcontractors
- Volunteers, facilitators, and trainers
- Visitors, journalists, and external evaluators

All parties are expected to uphold the principles of this policy and sign a Declaration of Commitment prior to engagement in the project.

### 3. Legal & Policy Framework

This policy is grounded in the following international, European, and Belgian legal frameworks:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 24)
- EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2021–2024)
- Belgian Penal Code (Articles 372–386) on sexual offences
- Law of 13 April 1995 on the abuse and exploitation of minors
- Decree of 13 March 2019 on youth aid (Communauté française)

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Belgian Data Protection Act (2018)  
Wherever national law provides higher protection, it shall prevail.

#### 4. Definitions

- Child: Any person under the age of 18.
- Youth: Persons aged 18–30 participating in youth empowerment activities.
- Abuse: All forms of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological maltreatment or neglect.
- Exploitation: The use of a child for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit.
- Safeguarding: Actions and measures taken to protect children and youth from harm and to ensure their rights are respected.
- Informed consent: Permission granted with full understanding of the implications, provided freely by the child and/or their legal guardian.

#### 5. Principles of Child and Youth Protection

All project activities shall be guided by the following principles:

- The best interests of the child and youth come first.
- Zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, or neglect.
- Equality and non-discrimination.
- Participation and empowerment of children and youth.
- Transparency, accountability, and confidentiality in all safeguarding actions.

#### 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Diesis Network, as partner of the Consortium of Youth 4 Development, is responsible for ensuring that child protection standards are implemented across all partners.

Each partner organization must:

- Adopt this policy or an equivalent safeguarding framework.
- Nominate a Child Protection Focal Point.
- Ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training.
- Report any incidents following the established procedure.
- Diesis Network will monitor compliance and provide support to partners to strengthen safeguarding capacity.

## 7. Code of Conduct

All people covered by this policy must:

- Treat all children and youth with respect and dignity.
- Never engage in any form of sexual or inappropriate behavior with minors.
- Avoid being alone with a child where possible.
- Use language and behavior that are appropriate and non-discriminatory.
- Report any concern, suspicion, or allegation of abuse immediately.

Unacceptable behaviors include physical punishment, sexual relations with minors, humiliating language, and exploitation for labor or gain.

## 8. Reporting & Response Procedures

Any suspicion or incident of abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be reported immediately to the DIESIS Network Child Protection Officer.

Contact: [HR@diesis.coop](mailto:HR@diesis.coop) – Samira Ben Taouet

In Belgium, urgent cases must also be referred to the relevant authorities (SOS Enfants or Vertrouwenscentra Kindermishandeling) or to the police.

Reports should be made using the standard reporting form (Annex B). All information will be handled confidentially in accordance with GDPR. Retaliation against whistle-blowers is strictly prohibited.

## 9. Communication, Images & Media

DIESIS Network commits to portraying children and youth respectfully and accurately in all communications.

- Written consent from the child and guardian must be obtained before using identifiable images or quotes.
- Images of children in distress, undress, or implying victimization are strictly prohibited.
- Data and visuals shall be stored securely in compliance with GDPR. The statement “Images used do not depict actual victims” must appear in all relevant publications.

## 10. Recruitment, Training & Monitoring

All personnel and partners involved in the Youth 4 Development project will be selected with consideration for safeguarding standards.

- Recruitment procedures include reference checks and, where legally permissible, criminal record verification.
- Safeguarding training will be mandatory for all staff and partners.
- Diesis Network will conduct regular reviews to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and respond to emerging risks.

## Annexes

- A. Declaration of Commitment
- B. Reporting Form
- C. Consent Form for Children and Guardians

### Annex A – Declaration of Commitment

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I have read and understood the DIESIS Network Child Protection Policy for the Youth 4 Development project.

I fully commit to upholding its principles and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and youth participating in project activities.

I understand that failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures, including termination of contract or cooperation, and may be referred to by the appropriate authorities if required by law.

Full Name: Gianluca Pastorelli

Organization: DIESIS Network

Role/Title: Executive President

Signature:



Date: 24/11/2025

## Annex B – Child Protection Reporting Form

This form should be completed by any person who becomes aware of, suspects, or witnesses a possible case of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child or young person within the Youth 4 Development project. All reports will be treated as confidential and handled in line with GDPR and Belgian data protection laws.

Date of report	
Name of reporter	
Role/Organization	
Contact details	
Child's name and age	
Location of incident	
Description of concern (what happened, when, where, who was involved)	
Immediate actions taken (if any)	
Has the child been informed?	
Has the guardian been informed?	
Referred to (Child Protection Officer, SOS Enfants, Police, etc.)	
Follow-up actions proposed	

### Annex C – Consent Form for Children and Guardians

This form is to be used whenever a child or young person participates in project activities where their opinions, images, or personal data may be collected or shared (e.g., interviews, photos, videos, events).

Project: Youth 4 Development

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand the purpose of this activity and how the information, image, or material will be used.

I give permission for my child to participate and for the data collected to be used for educational or communication purposes in accordance with GDPR and Diesis Network's safeguarding policy.

I consent to the use of my child's image (photo/video)

I do not consent to the use of my child's image

Child's signature (if able): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_