

## **Procedures for dealing with sexualised violence against minors and vulnerable or dependent adults**

KOLPING INTERNATIONAL considers it its task to strengthen the rights and development of minors and vulnerable or dependent adults and to protect them from harm, in particular from exploitation, sexual violence and abuse. This task can only be achieved in a trusting collaboration with the partners of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL.

Both our project partners and we as KOLPING INTERNATIONAL have an obligation to help ensure that people are respected as individuals and can live in a safe and supportive environment. In the projects we support, they are entrusted to our project partners in many ways. This trusting relationship is a precious commodity. Any form of sexual abuse in particular causes immense suffering to those affected, destroys the relationship of trust and brings discredit on the executing agencies.

As a rule, we as KOLPING INTERNATIONAL are not ourselves the executing agencies of the projects we support. This is why we cannot take direct responsibility for the staff in these projects. Consequently, we could not act directly in the event of abuse. Nevertheless, we bear a substantial moral responsibility for the well-being of vulnerable people in these projects, which obliges us to be particularly attentive and sensitive. Therefore, every indication of exposure to harm must be investigated and every suspicion must be clarified. The project partners are required to instruct their staff accordingly. They are also requested to develop their own prevention concepts and reporting guidelines.

1. Once employees of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL become aware of sexual violence by staff in projects, they shall immediately inform the International Executive Board or the person to contact at KOLPING INTERNATIONAL Cooperation e.V in cases of sexual violence.
2. The desk officer responsible for the project concerned shall immediately inform the legal entity responsible for the project and the executive board about the suspicion and ask them to inform him/her about the case as well as about any steps already taken. If there are concrete grounds for suspicion of imminent danger to vulnerable persons, the International Executive Board requests the legal entity to relieve the person(s) concerned of their duties and activities in the project until the allegations have been clarified and to prevent any contact with the alleged victim as well as other minors and vulnerable or dependent adults. KOLPING INTERNATIONAL reacts by scheduling its own appointments with the partner or in the project either digitally or on site or, if necessary, by commissioning an external investigation.
3. When conducting the initial investigation of the allegations, the legal entity shall exercise the utmost care and prudence. The protection of the alleged victim(s) is as important as the respect of the rule of law principle of the presumption of innocence until conviction by the judiciary. We expect the legal entity to deal responsibly with the allegations and to take care of full clarification and complete documentation of the procedure and measures. In this regard, it is particularly important to comply with the respective legal provisions of the country concerned regarding the duty to report to the responsible prosecuting authority. All incidents committed in an ecclesiastical context must also be reported to the church authorities. Here, the valid norms of the universal church must be observed and complied with.

4. The legal entity shall offer the necessary assistance to the victims. It shall, on behalf of the organisation, seek forgiveness from the victim and his/her relatives in an appropriate manner.
5. KOLPING INTERNATIONAL expects the legal entity to inform us, as the project contract partner, about the progress and the result of the initiated measures by providing us with complete documentation within the period of time that is appropriate for the processing.
6. In the event that an internal and external assessment shows that the case is not being handled adequately by those responsible for the project, we reserve the right to take further steps with regard to the organisation of future project cooperation. Depending on the gravity of the offence or omission, the following actions may be considered, among others:
  - Institutional:
    - Suspension of the disbursement of funds already approved;
    - Termination of the project agreement, discontinuation of project cooperation;
    - Non-approval of follow-up funding;
  - Individual:
    - Expulsion from KOLPING INTERNATIONAL.

In this regard, the proportionality of the measures must be taken into account so as not to unnecessarily jeopardise the survival of an entire project or a funded institution, which would in turn be at the expense of numerous other minors and vulnerable or dependent adults.

In the project contracts, the partners shall be obliged to comply with these principles.

With these guidelines, we hope to make our contribution to raising awareness of the dignity of the human being in all situations and to creating an environment together that is in line with our ideal values at Kolping. They were adopted by the International Executive Board of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL in Cologne on November 3, 2022.