

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

SAM.CPP.POL. (DIR)



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INTRODUCTION

We are acutely aware of the risks that tourism can have on children. As a responsible company operating in the tourism industry, we are determined to play our part in working to protect children from sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse.

This Policy outlines how Sampan is ensuring the protection of children in the destinations in which we operate.

This Policy is updated annually. All full-time, permanent employees of Sampan Travel are taken through the Policy to ensure full comprehension and compliance. It is then sent to The Code - short for “The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism”, a multi-stakeholder initiative with the mission to provide awareness, tools and support to the tourism industry to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. Sampan has been a member of The Code since 2017.

This Policy can be accessed [via our website](#) and it can be sent to all upon request.

Photo: Hope Watson / Face of Myanmar

1. LABOUR RIGHTS & TRAINING



1.1 Sampan Travel operates in concordance with the ILO's Minimum Age Convention of 1973 and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999.

1.2 All full-time employees of Sampan Travel complete The Code's E-learning module for tourism professionals working for a tour operator / travel agent on how to prevent the sexual exploitation of children, as part of their induction course. Our certificates are available to be seen upon request. This is repeated each year.

1.3 All full-time employees of Sampan Travel, as part of their induction course, complete the Travelife online module 'Child Protection Training'. Our certificates are available to be seen upon request.

All full-time employees of Sampan Travel complete The Code's E-learning module for tourism professionals and the Travelife online module 'Child Protection Training' as part of their induction course.

1.4 Sampan Travel embarks upon *ad hoc* training, seminars, consultations and round-tables in regard to child protection in tourism and best practices to prevent child exploitation. In the past, these have been led by the ChildSafe programme of Friends International and the Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute (MRTI) alongside UNICEF.

1.5 On a yearly basis – upon re-writing this Policy – all of Sampan’s full-time, permanent employees are taken through this policy alongside [the ILO Minimum Age Convention of 1973](#) (simplified summary [here](#)), [the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999](#) (simplified summary [here](#)) and [the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (simplified summary [here](#)). The Sampan team watch videos [introducing the ILO](#) and the CRC ([here](#) and [here](#)) and discuss how this applies to Sampan’s activities.

2. CHILD EXPLOITATION PROCEDURE

2.1 Sampan Travel supports our team in taking action against the sexual exploitation of children. The training outlined in 1., identifies how to spot signs of child exploitation and the recommended procedures to take.

2.2. If approached by individuals facilitating the sexual exploitation of children ... our team are instructed to notify their line manager who will then notify the authorities.

2.3 If one of our team thinks they are being asked to assist or facilitate the sexual exploitation of children ... they should investigate further, try and find out more information and seek clarity on exactly what they are being asked. If after further investigation, they still believe that they are being asked to assist or facilitate in the sexual exploitation of children, they should report to their line manager.

2.4 If one of our team suspects a case of child sexual exploitation ... they should attempt to find out more information. This could be by, for instance, speaking to the hotel manager or guide, so to ascertain key information. If further enquiries indicate a case of child sexual exploitation, line manager should be informed, who will then notify the authorities.

2.5 If a child is in immediate danger ... our team are instructed to call a local emergency number and notify their line manager. They must take notes of the situation for the authorities, considering who, what, when, where and why. It is important to note clothing, distinguishing features and vehicles and license plates. Taking a geotag might also be useful if not at an explicit landmark. The lines to call are at the government’s call centre for human trafficking in Yangon (+95 1 554 820) and Nay Pyi Daw (+95 9 495 55 666). In India, call Childline India (1098).

2.6 There is no typical offender of the sexual exploitation of children. Although the above procedures principally refer to Sampan’s guests (ie. travellers), similar action should be taken in the case of a suspect being a member of our supply chain or even a colleague.

3. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT



3.1 All of Sampan's suppliers receive each year our updated Positive Impact Policy (SAM.PIP.POL) as well as our Mission Statement & Ethical Code (SAM.ETH.POL), both which outline our endeavour to protect children from sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse, including child labour.

3.2 As of 2022, all the suppliers that Sampan works with (except for Guides, see point 3.5) are requested to complete Sampan's Partners Positive Impact Self-Assessment Form (SAM.SAS.FORM), where they are requested to measure their impact on the protection of children. Only suppliers that have signed the contract and completed the form are eligible to work with Sampan Travel. Breaches of contract result in a suspension of collaboration with the supplier. Alongside the Contract and the Form, Sampan's suppliers are invited to sign up to The Code and Travelife. Where possible, Sampan will allow suppliers access to our accounts so to aid with the training of their team.

3.3. Following on from the above, Sampan conducts an On-Site Positive Impact Report to ensure that the supplier is conforming with the Contract and to verify the answers given in the Form. The topics of the On-Site Positive Impact Report reflect those of the Form. Sampan Travel will not pursue partnerships with suppliers who score a cumulative negative score in any of the topics (eg. 'Good Health & Well-Being', which covers child protection) or who score a negative score overall.

3.4. Our suppliers with a positive impact are rated through the Report as Bronze, Silver or Gold. Their rating is clearly displayed upon our itinerary-builder software, as is the more in-depth results of the Report. This allows our travel consultants to select the suppliers with the most positive impact when creating itineraries, as stipulated in our Sales & Consultancy SOPs (SAM.SAL.SOP).

3.5. Instead of the Form and Report, all Sampan's guides are taken through our Guide SOPs (SAM.GUI.SOP) each year. Once their comprehension is assured, they are asked to sign a copy of the SOPs to signify their agreement which we keep internally on file. The Guide SOPs:

- address when it is and when it is not appropriate to take photographs and if appropriate how to do so in a respectful manner,
- instruct our guides not to take guests to orphanages or schools,
- discourage our guests from buying from children or giving money to begging children, and
- instruct our guides to be on the lookout for signs of child exploitation, to avoid such places and inform Sampan Travel of any suspicions.

3.6. After 12 months of service with Sampan Travel – or prior to this if they are willing – Sampan's guides are requested to complete relevant online training on Travelife (as outlined in this Policy points 1.2 and 1.3).

3.7. Sampan works with and supports suppliers that are having a direct positive impact on the lives of children and young people, such as the vocational restaurant Shwe Sabwe, and the vocational training centre Inle Heritage House.

4. GUEST GUIDELINES

4.1. It is Sampan Travel's policy to not offer visits to schools or orphanages as part of our itineraries. We understand that the vast majority of people requesting to visit schools and orphanages do so with the best intentions. However, we are aware that not only can these visits be disruptive to the children, but the commercialization of orphanages through 'orphanage tourism' in other Southeast Asian countries has led to the maltreatment of the children that these orphanages purport to be helping.

4.2. Sampan's travel consultants are ready and willing to facilitate responsible ways in which our guests can support the children of Myanmar and India without visiting schools and orphanages.

4.2. Sampan's clients are sent our Child Protection Guidelines for Guests (SAM.CPG.GLS) as part of the standard booking procedure.

4.3. Our Child Protection Policy is available to the public [via our website.](#)

Sampan's travel consultants are ready and willing to facilitate responsible ways in which our guests can support the children of Myanmar without visiting schools and orphanages.

5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 Sampan addresses the issue of child protection openly on our website through our Positive Impact Policy and others. Similarly, the issue is addressed on our online magazine in articles such as *Ma Khin of Linkage* and *Third Story Project*.

5.2 Through our social media accounts, Sampan Travel shares topical and useful information and advice in regard to child protection in Myanmar.



5.3 Companies working to protect and support the children of Myanmar are featured as Green Heroes on our website.

5.4 We participate in events for the bettering and promotion of children's development and protection in our local community, principally Yangon. We support and promote organizations such as Third Story Project, who each in their own way are working towards the protection and support of marginalized youth.

5.5 Sampan Travel is open to work in conjunction with organisations and private enterprises working to protect and support the children of Myanmar and India and share best practice in protecting children throughout the tourism industry. At the time of this Policy's updating, Sampan's CEO is part of the Child Protection Working Group managed by the Mekong Tourism Co-ordinating Office (MTCO). In June 2020, Sampan's CEO spoke at the UN's Virtual Forum on Responsible Business in a side event titled 'Rethinking the Restart of Tourism in the Asia-Pacific Region' focusing on tour operators and child protection in Myanmar.

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