



AKTION AMAZONAS

ANTI CHILD LABOUR POLICY

Last Revised: October 2024

CONTENT

1. Purpose of the Anti-Child Labour Policy	3
2. Definitions of Forms of Child Labour	3
3. Scope of Policy Coverage	4
4. Policy Principles	4
5. Indigenous Communities and Traditions	5
6. Procedures for Handling Cases or Suspicions of Child Labour	6
7. Monitoring and Evaluation	7

1. Purpose of the Anti-Child Labour Policy

Aktion Amazonas (AKAM) is dedicated to safeguarding the rights, well-being, and dignity of children, ensuring that all its projects and activities prioritize and positively contribute to their protection, education, and development. This policy aims to articulate AKAM's stance against child labour while establishing guidelines and procedures that protect children, respecting local cultural contexts.

As a member of the South American Forest Conservation Alliance (SAFCA), AKAM promotes sustainable livelihoods while adhering to international standards against child labour and local labour laws, including national minimum working age regulations and mandatory education policies in the countries where it operates.

This policy aligns with international standards, such as those set by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, reflecting AKAM's broader mission to foster sustainable, climate-resilient, and socially responsible community livelihoods in the Amazon region.

Building forest-based, climate-resilient economies is central to AKAM's efforts, with strategies that include training communities in sustainable harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), primary processing, and agroforestry skills. Recognizing that NTFP harvesting is a traditional, family-based activity that may involve children, AKAM incorporates cultural sensitivity into its guidelines to balance economic, social, and cultural needs while protecting children's rights.

2. Definitions of Forms of Child Labour

- **Child Labour:** Work performed by children below the legal working age that hinders their education, development, or well-being.
- **Hazardous Labour:** Activities that expose children to physical, psychological, or moral harm. Examples include handling dangerous tools, carrying heavy loads, or exposure to toxic substances.
- **Light Work:** Age-appropriate tasks that do not interfere with children's schooling or development, including preventing them from attending school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

The policy differentiates child labour from age-appropriate forms of family-based participation in traditional livelihoods such as harvesting NTFPs that are safe, supervised, and do not compromise a child's health, safety (such as climbing tall trees or working with sharp tools), or educational opportunities. Such participation can be culturally significant and beneficial, provided it aligns with relevant.

3. Scope of Policy Coverage

The policy applies to:

- All AKAM staff, board members, volunteers, consultants, and representatives.
- Partner organizations, including local community-based associations, cooperatives, and implementing agencies involved in AKAM's projects.
- All activities financed, supported, or implemented by AKAM or its partner organizations, including NTFP, initiatives, and related sustainable resource management activities.

By agreeing to participate in AKAM's programs, all parties commit to adhering to this policy and to ensuring that no form of child labour is permitted or endorsed.

Specific strategies will be employed to engage indigenous communities, ensuring respect for their unique cultural practices. This includes holding regular consultations with indigenous leaders, incorporating traditional knowledge into program designs, and providing training materials in indigenous languages to promote collaboration while upholding child labor prevention standards.

4. Policy Principles

- **Commitment to Education:** AKAM emphasizes the importance of children's schooling and development, ensuring that project activities do not disrupt access to quality education.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** AKAM recognizes that family-based activities may involve children in culturally appropriate ways. Such participation must prioritize safety and not conflict with educational obligations. Additionally, AKAM is committed to addressing systemic economic drivers of child labor, such as poverty and lack of access to education, by integrating support for economic alternatives and improving access to educational resources.

- **Gender-Sensitive Measures:** AKAM acknowledges that child labor impacts boys and girls differently. Monitoring, awareness-raising, and remedial actions will include gender-specific measures to address vulnerabilities, such as preventing exploitative domestic work often affecting girls and hazardous tasks that disproportionately impact boys.
- **Compliance with Local Laws:** AKAM ensures full compliance with local child labor laws across the South American countries where it operates. In cases of conflict between international standards and local regulations, AKAM will seek guidance to harmonize its approach while prioritizing the best interests of the child.
- **Zero Tolerance for Exploitation:** Any form of exploitative child labor is strictly prohibited in all AKAM-supported initiatives.
- **Capacity Building:** AKAM collaborates with communities to raise awareness of child labor risks, promote sustainable practices that safeguard children's rights, and conducts mandatory training and regular audits for partners and contractors to ensure alignment with the policy.
- **Nature-based rainforest associations:** Safeguards are integrated into organizational structures of any local, nature-based rainforest associations established under AKAM's projects.

5. Indigenous Communities and Traditions

- **Traditional, family-based livelihoods:** AKAM recognizes that traditional, family-based livelihoods often include children's involvement to maintain cultural heritage and pass on knowledge about the sustainable use of forest resources. While such participation may be positive and beneficial under specific conditions, it must never:
 - Compromise a child's right to a quality education;
 - Expose children to hazardous conditions, harsh environments, or undue responsibilities;
 - Replace formal schooling or training that supports their future well-being and personal development.

6. Procedures for Handling Cases or Suspicions of Child Labour

If any stakeholder suspects or becomes aware of child labour in an AKAM-supported activity, the following procedures must be followed:

- **Reporting Mechanism:** Any suspicion or evidence of child labor must be reported immediately to AKAM's Child Safeguarding Focal Point (CSFP) or an authorized senior staff member. AKAM has established child-friendly reporting channels, such as trusted community representatives, to empower children to voice concerns safely.
- **Confidentiality and Protection:** All reports will be treated confidentially, and the reporting party will be protected from retaliation.
- **Investigation Process:** All reports will be promptly investigated. This includes consultation with local authorities, relevant CSOs, and community leaders to ensure comprehensive support and resolution of the issue and may include partnering with local child protection agencies. Consultations may also involve interviews with the child, their family, community representatives, and any involved staff or partners.
- **Partnership Accountability:** Partners and contractors found in violation of this policy may face termination of contracts or other disciplinary actions.
- **Corrective Actions:** If child labor is identified, AKAM will work with relevant stakeholders to:
 - Ensure the child's immediate removal from harmful activities.
 - Adjust project activities.
 - Provide transitional support for families, such as alternative income-generation activities, to mitigate economic risks associated with removing children from labor.
 - Address underlying economic or social conditions contributing to child labor.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Regular Assessments:** AKAM conducts regular monitoring to ensure compliance with this policy across all projects.
- **Community Engagement:** AKAM uses feedback mechanisms to empower communities in reporting child labor concerns and advocating for children's rights.
- **Training:** Staff, partners, and community members receive training on child rights, child protection principles, and ethical livelihood practices that respect children's well-being.
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect evolving standards and best practices.