

**UGANDA COMMUNITY BASED ASSOCIATION
FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN WELFARE**



SAFE GUARDING POLICY

The sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, protection and the child protection policies

STRATEGIC VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

We envision empowered communities free of poverty and able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mission

To promote human rights and improve the welfare of vulnerable women and children using community-based initiatives.

Values

Our core values are those on which UCOBAC was founded. We value honesty, transparency and accountability in our actions and work. We value excellence and integrity in our work and have a spirit of volunteerism and teamwork. We value respect for people we serve, their effective participation and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

Objectives

- To identify and define vulnerable women and children, their needs and priority programs.
- To advocate for positive welfare policies and programs to meet priority needs of vulnerable women and children.
- To plan, design and implement programs to promote rights and welfare of women and children.
- To enable individuals, families and the local communities to acquire and sustain the capacity to plan, obtain and manage resources which promote rights and improve welfare of women and children over time.

Abbreviations

SoC Subject of Complaint

UCOBAC Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare

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Definition of key words

Survivor; The person who it is alleged has been the subject of sexual harassment, abuse or exploitation.

Complainant; The person who raises a complaint (this may or may not be the survivor).

Subject of Complaint/Subject of Concern/ SoC: The person against whom the allegation, complaint or concern has been raised.

Suspicion of misconduct: A concern that has been raised through any of the reporting pathways. This suspicion is assessed at an initial case conference / stakeholder panel.

Allegation of misconduct: If, at case conference / stakeholder panel stage there is a decision to investigate the suspicion of misconduct then it is treated as an 'allegation of misconduct'.

Outcome of Investigation: Once an allegation is investigated and the investigation report is reviewed, the resulting recommendations are referred to as the 'outcome of investigation'.

INTRODUCTION

The Safeguarding policy is an official policy statement that guides the organization on how to ensure safety of its target group including children, young people (youth and adolescents) and women either those working or offering services to the organization or those served by the organization. This policy states clearly the organization's commitment and procedures that will be undertaken to keep all children, young people and women safe and respond to their safety concerns and protection needs. The safeguarding policy further promotes the rights and fundamental freedoms of children, young people and women by creating an environment where they can thrive without fear of violence and abuse.

This safeguarding policy is supported by a number of international and national legal frameworks and legislations that promote and protect the rights of children, young people and women. At International level, the policy is based on provisions of is the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1990) and the Organization of African Unity Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) which call for the respect and promotion of rights of children without discrimination of any kind. They further call for establishment of appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment and establishment of institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children...particularly in the areas of safety and health. This Safeguarding policy is further guided by the United Nations Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) which promotes equal rights of men and women and protects women against any form of violation and abuse economic, social, cultural, civil and political.

At National level, the policy is guided by Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), the Children's Act (2003), National Council for Children Statute (1996), National Youth Council Act (2003), National Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Policy (2004) and the gender policy (2007) which promote the rights and fundamental freedoms of children, young people and women and protect them against any forms of violation, abuse and harm.

This safeguarding policy domesticates/localizes these international and national legal instruments at institutional/organizational level in order to protect children, young people and women serving or being served by the institution/organization from violation and harm.

PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE POLICY STATEMENT

In line with UCOBAC's mission is to promote rights and welfare of children and women, this safe guarding policy aims at;

- ✓ Providing procedures and measures to ensure children and young people are safe and protected from all forms of harm, abuse and violations that may hinder their full development and welfare.
- ✓ Providing procedures and measures to ensure women are safe and protected from all forms of harm, violations and abuse that violates their human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY STATEMENT

- ✓ This Safeguarding policy applies to children below the age of eighteen.
- ✓ This safeguarding policy applies to young people (10-24 years) including Adolescents (10-19).
- ✓ This safeguarding policy also applies to all women.

- ✓ All adults who are in constant or occasionally contact with these groups including for example, management and board, staff, volunteers, partners, donors, sponsors, visitors, consultants, journalists, child caretakers/parents/guardians, must comply with this safeguarding policy.

UCOBAC'S SAFE GUARDING POLICIES

1. SEXUAL HARRASSMENT, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE PROTECTION POLICY

Sexual harassment; Is behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. It is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another. Such conduct will be also be considered sexual harassment when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders.

Sexual Exploitation: Is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. UCOBAC recognizes that the terms sexual abuse and exploitation represent a wide spectrum of behaviours and is not limited to the act of sexual intercourse.

Sexual Abuse; The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. This would include forced marriage and sexual slavery and also includes sexual activity with a child (any person under the age of 18). It also includes child Sexual Abuse which is when a child is used by another child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual abuse involves contact and non-contact activities which encompasses all forms of sexual activity involving children, including exposing a child to online child sexual exploitation material, or taking sexually exploitative images of children.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy sets out UCOBAC's approach to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. It spells out UCOBAC's commitments to prevent sexual harassment and exploitation and ensure effective action is taken when such cases and concerns are reported or occur. It further spells out the principles upon which we will base our decision making and actions in case a sexual harassment and exploitation concern or case is reported or occurs. The policy also spells out the expectations and code of conduct of all those who work on behalf of UCOBAC or who come in contact with the organization.

POLICY STATEMENT

- ✓ UCOBAC has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse.
- ✓ At UCOBAC, we believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence and any abuse of power regardless of age, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, religion or ethnic origin.
- ✓ We recognize that there are unequal power dynamics across the organization and in relation to those we serve, and that we face risk of some people exploiting their position of power for personal gain.

- ✓ This policy applies to all people that work on behalf of UCOBAC or are engaged with the organization in one way or another. UCOBAC will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners, visitors or any other representative associated with the delivery of its work carrying out any form of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.
- ✓ UCOBAC commits to supporting survivors, improving safeguarding capacity, reporting, investigating, responding to, and preventing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- ✓ UCOBAC's appointed Safeguarding focal point person will use this Policy in conjunction with relevant employment/labor laws, and relevant criminal laws to make decisions about how to respond to any complaints and concerns raised.

PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENT

UCOBAC is committed to achieving full, ongoing implementation of the Six Core Principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2019) by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

- ✓ Sexual exploitation and abuse by UCOBAC employees and anyone working on behalf of the organization constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for facing disciplinary action and dismissal/ termination of employment/contract.
- ✓ Sexual activity with children and adolescents (below 18 years) is prohibited and is grounds for disciplinary action and dismissal. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.
- ✓ Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior towards project participants, beneficiaries, fellow employees, partners, visitors, by UCOBAC employees and anyone working on behalf of the organization is prohibited.
- ✓ Any sexual relationships between UCOBAC Employees or anyone working on behalf of UCOBAC and organization project participants, beneficiaries are forbidden. Given the contexts where UCOBAC operates, such relationships may be based on inherently unequal power dynamics and may undermine the credibility and integrity of UCOBAC's operations.
- ✓ Where a UCOBAC employee or anyone working on behalf of the organization develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms through the organization's safeguarding focal point person.
- ✓ UCOBAC employers and employees are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse for all those who work on behalf of UCOBAC and those in the communities that participate and benefit from UCOBAC's interventions and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. UCOBAC management at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

- ✓ UCOBAC will establish a robust prevention and response mechanism within the organization, offering support to survivors, and holding those responsible for sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse accountable.

UCOBAC SEXUAL HARRASSMENT, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The organization will follow the following procedures to safeguard and protect its employees, persons working on behalf of UCOBAC and project participants/beneficiaries from sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. **(i) Awareness raising** on sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and associated risks and the organizations safeguarding policy and procedures, **(ii) Prevention** by providing guidance on how to safeguard against sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse (**iii) Reporting** by setting up clear reporting procedures and mechanisms to promote reporting of cases and concern **(iv)Protection and Responding** by ensure clear action is taken when cases/concerns of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse are suspected, reported or occur.

a) AWARENESS RAISING & PREVENTION

- ✓ Ensure that all employees, those working on behalf of UCOBAC and partners know the organization's sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse protection policy, code of conduct and procedures, reporting and complaints channels.
- ✓ Ensure that all old and new employees, those working on behalf of UCOBAC and partners are educated/trained and informed about forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and the associated impacts to the victims and the organization.
- ✓ Providing public awareness on sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and its associated impacts to the victims and the organization and the existing safeguarding procedures and standards to prevent and respond to cases and concerns of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.
- ✓ In compliance with applicable laws, UCOBAC is committed to prevent perpetrators of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse from being (re)hired or (re)deployed or contracted to offer services on behalf of UCOBAC. Managers and Human Resource teams will ensure robust recruitment screening processes and background checks for all potential personnel, including employees, volunteers, consultants and other.
- ✓ UCOBAC's employees and others working on behalf of UCOBAC are required to take proactive measures to avoid causing inadvertent harm to people, contribute to actively reduce existing threats and ensure programs are conflict sensitive. This includes embedding sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse protection good practice prevention measures throughout the program and project cycle, including project design, grant proposals, assessments, complaints and feedback mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation.

b) REPORTING

- ✓ Ensure that have multiple channels for UCOBAC employees, anyone working on behalf or representing the organization, project participants/beneficiaries, and others to safely report sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. These channels should be designed in consultation with local communities and staff to ensure that they are safe and accessible.
- ✓ Ensure that UCOBAC employees, anyone working on behalf or representing the organization, project participants/beneficiaries, and others have information about how to access these safe reporting channels. This should include posting reporting procedures in local languages and regularly explaining these channels.
- ✓ Provide training and information to all UCOBAC employees, particularly safeguarding focal points for receiving complaints, to ensure they understand their obligations and how to discharge their duties should they receive a complaint. A particular emphasis should be made on confidentiality.
- ✓ Encourage and create an enabling environment for affected persons to report incidences of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. There is no obligation for an individual to report any incident that has happened to them.
- ✓ Everyone who works on behalf of UCOBAC is required to report any suspicions or incidences of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse of others. Individuals can raise a concern/complaint to UCOBAC about an incident they have experienced, witnessed, or heard about concerning a UCOBAC staff member or partner (suppliers, funder, contractor, visitor etc.) without fear of retribution. Failure to report to a relevant person suspicion or incident of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse is a breach of UCOBAC's policy, and could lead to disciplinary action being taken against them and the termination/dismissal.
- ✓ Individuals can report directly to UCOBAC verbally or in writing to UCOBAC's management or safeguarding focal personnel or to a whistle blowing helpline if available.
- ✓ Complaints can be made anonymously. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process. Information that identifies individuals involved in a complaint will be limited to essential personnel and will not be shared further without obtaining the informed consent of those involved, except if someone's life is at risk, a child is at risk, or as required by law in consultation with legal counsel and where safe to do so. Non-identifying information will be shared as per reporting requirements. Staff involved in the complaints process will be made aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality and may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Employees who breach confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- ✓ Complainants, Survivors and Witnesses that report incidences or concerns/suspicions of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse must be protected from retaliation. UCOBAC will take action against anyone, whether they are the subject of a complaint or not, who seek or carry out retaliatory action against complainants, survivors or other witnesses which will involve disciplinary action, up to and including employment termination/dismissal.

c) RESPONDING AND PROTECTING

- ✓ UCOBAC will respond in a professional and timely manner to all concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse.
- ✓ All concerns or allegations will always be taken seriously, and investigated and acted upon where appropriate.
- ✓ UCOBAC will undertake robust and accountable case management: All allegations and subsequent follow-up, will be documented in a secure and confidential database to ensure accountability.
- ✓ The cases must not be delayed. Immediate action should be undertaken as case delayed is justice denied – The case should be attended to within 24-72 hours of reporting.
- ✓ UCOBAC will carry out independent, safe, and discreet investigations, through the Safeguarding authority/team appointed at the organization, recognizing the rights of and duty of care to everyone involved, including the complainant and/or survivor, witnesses and the Subject of Complaint (SoC). An independent and gender representative decision making panel will be assigned to the investigation team to ensure impartiality, transparency, and accountability.
- ✓ UCOBAC should take accountable decision-making through taking swift and appropriate action against anyone found beyond reasonable doubt to that have committed sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. This may include administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant local authorities if appropriate and safe to do so.
- ✓ Survivors of SHEA are entitled to specialized support services. UCOBAC commits to refer survivors to competent support services as appropriate and available and according to the wants and the needs of the survivor. Support may include; specialist psychosocial support such as counseling, medical assistance, legal counseling and access to UCOBAC's employee assistance programs/service (where available).

2. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

UCOBAC Child Protection policy reflects its commitment to ensure that children aged below eighteen and young people (10-24) years including Adolescents (10-19) years that either are served or serve within the organization are kept safe, protected from any form of violation, abuse or harm and their protection concerns responded to effectively.

POLICY SCOPE

- ✓ We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.
- ✓ The organization recognizes the contribution it can make to protect children and young people from harm and supporting and promoting their welfare as its core mission.

- ✓ We recognize the fact that children and young people are vulnerable to child abuse and violations in all places regardless of culture, race, sex or disability.
- ✓ We believe children and young people have the right to have their health, safety, well-being and their best interests considered as top priority.
- ✓ We believe children should be valued, respected and understood within their context of their own cultures, religion and ethnicity.
- ✓ We believe children's views should be given careful consideration and they should be empowered and encouraged to participate in decisions which affect them.
- ✓ The policy gives priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- ✓ The policy recognizes the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, for example with communication or the impact of discrimination.
- ✓ The policy will promote initiatives that prevent violation of the rights of children in relation to serious risks and hazards and a safe environment provided for children to thrive and explore their full potential.
- ✓ This policy applies to anyone who comes into contact with our organization including all staff, volunteers, visitors, partners, child caretakers/ guardians and gives clear direction to about expected behaviour/code of conduct and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.
- ✓ The safeguarding policy has four key elements including (i) **Awareness raising** of child abuse and violations and associated risks, (ii) **Prevention** by providing guidance on how to safeguard children from abuse and violation (iii) **Reporting** by setting up clear reporting procedures and mechanisms and (iv) **Responding** by ensure clear action is taken when child abuse is suspected or reported.

POLICY INTERVENTIONS

The organizations will undertake the following interventions to meet its commitment to keeping children safe.

- ✓ Write a detailed safeguarding and child protection procedure.
- ✓ Raise awareness and training on the child protection policy provisions to organization management and board, staff, volunteers, partners, donors, sponsors, visitors, consultants, journalists, child caretakers/parents/guardians, and other people who come into contact with children.
- ✓ Provide guidelines on staff and service provider recruitment /appointment /contracting to include background checks on history of child abuse and violation as ground for no recruitment/appointment/contracting and consider past experience and track record in working with children and young people.
- ✓ Appointment of a child protection lead at highest level in the organization for example among the member of the trustee board who takes lead responsibility for overseeing the implementation and assessment of the safeguarding and child protection policy in the organization.
- ✓ Ensure all management and board, staff, volunteers, partners, donors, sponsors, visitors, consultants, journalists, child caretakers/parents/guardians, and other people who come into

contact with children know, understand, follow and abide by the child protection provisions and procedures.

- ✓ Develop an open-door culture that facilitates reporting of any and all abuses and violations against children whether or not it is happening within your organization and create an environment where people especially children feel comfortable about sharing concerns.
- ✓ Ensuring children, young people and their families know about the organization's safeguarding and child protection policies and what to do or how they should respond if they have a safety concern.
- ✓ Establish an effective response mechanism with clear and transparent processes for disciplinary action to violators of the provisions of the safeguarding and child protection policy.
- ✓ The organization will protect and have zero tolerance to retaliation against anyone who reports acts of violation and abuse of children and young people.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

What is child abuse?

Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature.

Types of Child abuse

1. Physical abuse

This is the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. It is any non-accidental injury to a child. It is actual or physical harm to any child or a failure to prevent physical harm or suffering. Physical abuse may involve hitting, spanking, slapping, shaking, throwing, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, shoving, whipping, paddling, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating. It can also mean causing physical harm to a child by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child. The incidents may be single or repeated.

2. Sexual abuse and exploitation

This is evidenced by an activity between a child/young person and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual exploitation of a child includes all forms of sexual activity such as rape, defilement, pornography and incest, fondling, penetration, intercourse, exploitation, pornography, exhibitionism, child prostitution, group sex, oral sex, or forced observation of sexual acts.

3. Emotional abuse

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development. It is any attitude or behaviour which interferes with a child's mental health or social development. It may involve conveying to the child that he or she is worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or there only to meet the needs of another person; or imposing inappropriate expectations upon him/her. Acts include restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, scape-goating, corrupting, ridiculing, degrading, bullying, humiliating (e.g., asking potentially embarrassing questions, demanding potentially embarrassing action) or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. It also includes yelling, screaming, name-calling, shaming, negative comparisons to others, telling them they are "bad, no good, worthless" or "a mistake." Furthermore, the failure to provide the affection and support necessary for the development of a child's emotional, social, physical and intellectual well-being. This also includes ignoring, lack of appropriate physical affection (hugs), not saying "I love you," withdrawal of attention, lack of praise and lack of positive reinforcement.

4. Child neglect

This is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible. It also involves the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including; cold, starvation, locking up, and failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in impairment of the child's health, growth and development.

5. Child-to-child abuse

Allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with particular sensitivity; nevertheless, they have to be dealt with through the child protection procedures. All work with young people who have committed abuse requires an effective approach which ensures the protection of people affected, while at the same time supporting the young person in challenging and changing his/her behaviour. Any such approach requires;

- The recognition that a child who has abused another child differs significantly from adults who have committed similar offences, as the child is not fully aware of why he or she has committed abuse and what the consequences are.
- Keeping in mind that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all decisions made - for both the victim and the abuser.

6. Child Labour and Exploitation:

Using a child for economic gain, or performing work that may be hazardous, or that interferes with the child's growth and development. This includes educational programs that are focused on production rather than acquisition of skills, asking child to perform excessive chores and tasks, asking children under the minimum labour age to perform paid labour, and keeping a child out of an educational facility to perform other tasks.

7. Child Marriages:

The minimum age of marriage in Uganda is 18 for both girls and boys. In Uganda, child marriage is often a result of poverty. Many parents marry their daughters in the hope of securing their financial security. Bride price can also be a motivation for parents: a younger bride means a higher bride price for the family. Limited access to education for girls and traditional and social norms which dictate that girls are married at a young age in order to fulfil their role as a wife and mother, play a role too. In addition, displaced population living in refugee camps often feel unable to protect their daughters from rape. Marrying them off to a warlord or other authority figure is seen as a form of protection.

8. Bullying:

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves e.g. hitting, kicking, racist threats, name calling, teasing, isolating, shaming, harassment, provocation, hostile intent. It normally involves an imbalance in power between the bully and the bullied. Bullying types include, Physical bullying like hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property, verbal bullying like name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. Other kinds include; social bullying and cyber bullying.

UCOBAC SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

These are steps of action needed to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse, violation and harm. Each procedure applies to everyone who comes into contact with children and young people even if it is not their main role in the organization.

The organization will follow the following procedures to safeguard and protect children and young people. **(i) Awareness raising** of child abuse and violations and associated risks, **(ii) Prevention** by providing guidance on how to safeguard children from abuse and violation **(iii) Reporting** by setting up clear reporting procedures and mechanisms and **(iv) Protection and Responding** by ensure clear action is taken when child abuse is suspected or reported.

a) AWARENESS RAISING

- ✓ Ensure that all staff and partners know the organization's safeguarding and child protection procedures and the code of conduct.
- ✓ All staff and partners and other parent representatives will be educated on the types of child abuse and the impacts it has on children and young people.
- ✓ Providing public awareness on children's rights, child/young people's abuse and the organization's safeguarding procedures and standards.

b) PREVENTION

- ✓ Recruitment and selection procedures for staff, volunteer or any other persons will be subjected to back tracking of their criminal records.
- ✓ Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go un-noticed and challenged.
- ✓ Plan and organize the work, work place or visit to manage risks concerning children and young people. Making sure all your activities and events are run safely.

- ✓ Promote a culture of openness to stimulate and enable open discussion of any children and young people's protection issues or concerns
- ✓ Be aware of children and young people's vulnerability: generally, children with disabilities and girls are more vulnerable and susceptible to abuse and violations, thus requiring special protection.
- ✓ As far as possible, be visible in working with or visiting children and young people.
- ✓ Do not discriminate against and amongst children and young people. Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity regardless of race, colour, sex, religion and nationality.
- ✓ Empower children and young people, discuss their rights and responsibilities and inform them about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any safety concerns.
- ✓ Do not behave inappropriately with children and young people e.g., fondling, kiss, or touch children in culturally insensitive manner and do not develop physical or sexual relationship with children and young people.
- ✓ Do not act in ways that may be abusive to children and young people as described in the forms of child abuse above (physical abuse sexual abuse emotional abuse child neglect Child Labour and Exploitation: Child Marriages: Bullying).
- ✓ Keep children and young people safe online
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality and respect for children's privacy by controlling/supervising children and young people's interactions with adults/strangers including taking precautions in sharing children's information including home addresses, school addresses and images of children.

c) REPORTING

- ✓ In order to track and take relevant steps that concerns child and young people abuse and violation, UCOBAC shall create suitable channels for reporting child and young people abuse and ensuring their safety.
- ✓ Appoint designated person or safeguarding and child protection focal point persons to handle safeguarding and child protection issues in the organization.
- ✓ Promote a culture and environment that allows whistle blowing and complaints. Concerns or incidences of child abuse should be reported to designated person and authority.
- ✓ If a child or any concerned person is concerned about their or other child's safety, they should report to the nominated child protection lead or their deputy. Reporting concerns helps children's services build an overall picture of the child's life and the support they or their family may need.
- ✓ When abuse occurs or is suspected in one of the areas of UCOBAC's operation perpetrated by UCOBAC staff, volunteers, partners, visitors, etc., the community members must report such a case to the designated safeguarding authority or existing child protection governance authorities in the community like the Local Council or the nearest police department in charge of child protection Officer in the area.
- ✓ All reported cases/concerns should be taken seriously whether with or without immediate evidence until investigated and proven beyond reasonable doubt to be untrue.
- ✓ Any reported concerns/ cases must be kept confidential and should not be discussed with anyone other than the child protection lead, who should make a referral to children's services.
- ✓ If a child reports that they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in reporting the issue and emphasize that abuse is never their fault.

- ✓ Store and record reported child abuse and protection records.

d) PROTECTION AND RESPONSE

- ✓ Take steps to ensure the protection of the child who is the subject of concern
- ✓ Support and protect children, staff or others who raises the concern from retaliation and
- ✓ Staff should not start an investigation when the allegation is raised, this is the job of managers/and designated safeguarding responsible person/authority.
- ✓ Protection will be done in the best interest of a child. The dignity and rights of a child are to be respected in every circumstance. While trying to determine the best interest of a child, the child's rights to have their views taken into account should be given utmost consideration in accordance with their age and maturity.
- ✓ In interviewing and reporting of children, special attention is to be paid to every child's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- ✓ Establish proper, effective and transparent mechanisms for investigating the case/ concern to determine without reasonable doubt the facts about the reported case/ concern.
- ✓ Provide and make known the steps that will be taken by the organization in case of proof of abuse/violation/harm of a child or young person by staff, partners, visitors, child caretakers/guardians, etc. based on the organization's Human Resource policy (Discipline section) through the disciplinary committee.

What do I do if I think someone is abusing a child?

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused by someone, it is important that you **LISTEN** to them most of all.

Ask **ONLY** four questions

- What happened?
- Who did this to you?
- Where were you when this happened?
- When did this happen?

Asking any additional questions may contaminate a case!

DOs

- Provide a safe environment (be comforting, welcoming, and a good listener)
- Tell the child/young person it was not his/her fault
- Listen carefully
- Document the child/ young person's exact quotes
- Be supportive, not judgmental
- Know your limits
- Tell the truth
- Obtain permission/consent from the child/young person and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and when possible for documentary photographs where possible and appropriate, this permission/consent should be in writing.

- Notify the parents or the caretaker and encourage them to be supportive to the child and the investigation processes by the designated authorities

DO NOTs

- Do not investigate/ harshly interrogate the affected child/young person
- Do not ask leading questions (a question that suggests the answer or contains the information the questioner is looking for – That man touched you, didn't he?)
- Do not make promises Never promise a child that you will keep the things they're telling you a secret. Explain that you need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help –
- Do not do harm to the affected child or young person by further stigmatizing them, avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place them in danger or expose them to humiliation or that reactivate their pain and grief from traumatic events.
- Do not discriminate in choosing children/young people to interview because of sex, age, religion, status, educational back ground or physical abilities.
- Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used – and especially without their consent.

Historical allegations of abuse

Historical abuse in this policy refers to abuse which an adult reports as having suffered as a child while in contact with UCOBAC. It is often the case that an individual does not report abuse until many years after the event. UCOBAC will handle historical allegations of abuse transparently and responsibly according to their defined crisis management procedures.

UCOBAC will:

- ✓ Listen to allegations of historical abuse, take them seriously, and act responsibly towards them.
- ✓ Protect the adults who allege historical abuse from further abuse or retaliation.
- ✓ Protect any children and young people currently under UCOBAC's care from the person alleged to have been an abuser.
- ✓ Undertake investigations to establish the facts about the allegations and if proven beyond reasonable doubt, take appropriate action or deal with the case according to the organization's Human Resource policy (Discipline section) through the disciplinary committee.

CHILDREN AND MEDIA

UCOBAC recognizes that media and technology are a necessary component in educating and empowering children and young people. It is also important in raising public awareness and advocacy on the children and young people's priority needs, challenges, existing best practices, innovations, policy influencing, etc – This can be through photography, video coverage/film/documentaries, reports, newsletters, issue briefs, media reports/articles in mainstream and social media channels etc. It is however important to put into consideration the negative implications that may arise from use of media

and technology especially where it may expose the children and young people and their families to abuse and harm.

Protecting children's and young people's privacy in media and technological communications

The protection of a child's privacy refers to protection of any private data of the child as well as pictures, texts, films, etc. from the public. Any information about a child's history, medical condition and family background has to be stored carefully in the UCOBAC data base. This data is to be handled confidentially and with discretion and only used for the purpose for which it's collected. Children/Young people's privacy is for instance violated when their private information is produced for publicity proposes revealing the child's young person's identity without their consent. Exposure of this information to the public may expose the child to abuse, violation and harm.

All staff and external partners involved in spreading information on children and in creating and distributing publicity material **must** act according to the following guidelines:

- ✓ When producing publicity material featuring a child/young person, seek both the child and his or her legal guardian (or at least an adult caregiver of the child) for permission/consent to do so. This can be consent verbal or written, but preferably written consent.
- ✓ Do not actively ask children/young people to do or say anything that might make them feel displayed as objects of pity' (e.g. to speak about their past or ask for donations).
- ✓ Handle children/ young people's names carefully for example not real names are used, especially in connection with sensitive information about the same children (e.g., the family background, their medical condition, disability or negative behaviour).
- ✓ Act with caution when it comes to combining textual and visual information whenever a text includes sensitive information about a child/ young person and whenever a photo or video track shows sensitive aspects of a child/young person's life and reveals his or her identity.
- ✓ In case of a sensitive story on a child/young person that may cause abuse, stigma, violation to the child/young person, ensure that the actual identities are changed, obscured or not used
- ✓ Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child/young person, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used – and especially without their consent
- ✓ Always provide an accurate context for the child's story.
- ✓ Avoid categorizations or negative description that expose a child to reprisals and stigmatization for example lame, limping, crippled, raped, etc.
- ✓ Take images of children/ young people that are dignified and respectful.
- ✓ The collected information becomes a property of UCOBAC – It should not be used by any other organization or persons including; journalists, reporters, visitors, photographers, film makers and other media professionals without the consent from UCOBAC and the children/young people or their caretakers/parents.
- ✓ Do not make promises of returns for coverage and sharing of their information. However clearly explain the reasons and importance of collecting and sharing the information,

Following these guidelines, UCOBAC will ensure the respect of the children's privacy while at the same time preventing, and raising awareness for, violations of that privacy. Based on these guidelines, staff/workers who are directly involved with children have obligation to protect the children from any attempted violations of their privacy – be they intentional or not.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors – UCOBAC Board hold overall accountability for this policy and its implementation. The Board oversees and monitors the implementation/application of policy.

Senior Management (Executive Director, Deputy Directors): The UCOBAC Executive Director is responsible for the application/implementation of this policy within the organization. It is also responsible for developing systems that create and maintain a safe environment for employees and all that are in contact or relate with the organization. Senior management is also responsible for planning for safeguarding interventions in the organization including resource mobilization and planning for planned interventions. Management is also responsible for reviewing and updating the safeguarding policy in line with legislative and organizational developments, feedback and lessons learned.

Safe guarding focal point: An appointed Safe guarding focal point officer provides support to raise awareness, prevent, respond and protect against sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child and young people's abuse to alongside their substantive roles.

Safeguarding committee/advisors – Provide support to Focal Point to raise awareness, prevent, respond and protect against sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child and young people's abuse to alongside their substantive roles. They for example support in raising awareness on the safeguarding policy procedures and code of conduct, conducting regular trainings and promoting best practices, with a particular emphasis on staff that are in direct contact with the people served by the organization as well as receiving concerns, conducting referrals to specialized services and supporting investigations among others.

UCOBAC employees / those working on behalf of UCOBAC – Understand and abide by the safeguarding policy guidelines, procedures and code of conduct, raise awareness among project participants about the safeguarding policy guidelines, procedures and code of conduct, Report any safety and abuse concerns or occurrences, Consult with beneficiaries in a safe, accessible, and culturally appropriate way to ensure that project participants to raise complaints and concerns, and provide feedback to the existing safeguarding policy.

Project participants - Understand and abide by the safeguarding policy guidelines, procedures, Be vigilant and report any safety and abuse concerns or occurrences, provide feedback to existing safeguarding policy.

AUTHORISATION

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Date: 14th December 2020

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