

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

OF



**UGANDA COMMUNITY BASED ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN
AND CHILDREN WELFARE (UCOBAC)**

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1. Introduction

Children are the foundation of Uganda's future, and their safety, welfare, and dignity must be upheld at all times. The Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) is deeply committed to ensuring that every child grows up in a secure and nurturing environment where their rights are respected and promoted.

UCOBAC's Child Protection Policy is designed to safeguard children from abuse, exploitation, and harm, while promoting a culture of care, accountability, and responsibility among all those who work with or interact with children. This policy aligns with Uganda's national child protection framework and international commitments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

This policy outlines UCOBAC's commitment to protecting children, sets standards for behavior and practice, and provides guidelines for reporting concerns about child safety.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all UCOBAC staff, volunteers, interns, board members, consultants, partners, and any individuals or organizations representing or working with UCOBAC. It covers all activities and programs run by or affiliated with UCOBAC, both in and outside of Uganda.

3. Definitions

- (i) **Child:** Anyone under the age of 18 years, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Uganda's legal framework.
- (ii) **Child abuse:** Any action or lack of action that causes physical, emotional, sexual harm, or neglect to a child. It includes but is not limited to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.
- (iii) **Child protection:** Measures and structures put in place to prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence affecting children.

4. Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this Child Protection Policy are:

- a) To ensure the safety, protection, and well-being of children involved in UCOBAC's programs.
- b) To provide clear guidelines on preventing and addressing child abuse, exploitation, and neglect.
- c) To raise awareness about child protection responsibilities among UCOBAC staff, volunteers, and partners.
- d) To ensure all reported concerns about child safety are addressed promptly and effectively.
- e) To promote a child-friendly environment that respects children's rights, dignity, and safety.
- f) To comply with national and international legal standards on child protection.

5. Guiding Principles

- (i) **Child-Centered Approach:** All actions and decisions concerning children will prioritize the best interests of the child.
- (ii) **Zero Tolerance:** UCOBAC has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or exploitation.
- (iii) **Confidentiality:** Information relating to child protection concerns will be treated with confidentiality and shared only with authorized personnel.
- (iv) **Accountability:** All UCOBAC staff and partners will be held accountable for adhering to the policy.
- (v) **Non-Discrimination:** UCOBAC is committed to treating all children equally, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or other status.
- (vi) **Participation:** UCOBAC encourages child participation in creating a safe environment and empowers children to speak out against abuse and harm.
- (vii) **Do no Harm:** All actions taken in relation to children should prioritize their safety and well being. All staff will avoid any actions that cause harm to children

6. Code of Conduct for Working with Children

All staff, volunteers, and individuals associated with UCOBAC must adhere to the following guidelines:

a) Prohibited Actions

- (i) Engaging in any form of physical punishment or emotional abuse of a child.
- (ii) Engaging in or encouraging any form of sexual activity or exploitation involving a child.
- (iii) Employing children for labor that is inappropriate for their age or development stage, or in any manner that could harm their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.
- (iv) Sharing inappropriate or explicit content with or around children.
- (v) Neglecting a child's needs, including failing to provide adequate supervision or care during UCOBAC activities.
- (vi) Using language, or offering advice which is unsuitable, or abusive to a child
- (vii) Discriminating against children by favouring particular children and excluding others.
- (viii) Minimizing risk situations by avoiding placing yourself in compromising situation.
- (xi) Sexual behavior (does not engage in or allow sexually provocative games)
- (x) Do not use language that humiliates a child.

b) Required Conduct

- (i) Always ensure that children are treated with respect and dignity.
- (ii) Create a safe, secure, and child-friendly environment in all UCOBAC programs.
- (iii) Obtain parental or guardian consent for any activity involving direct work with children.
- (iv) Always be accompanied by another adult when interacting with children, avoiding situations where you are alone with a child unless necessary and approved.
- (v) Ensure that physical contact with children is appropriate, non-invasive, and only when necessary for their care or safety.
- (vi) Report any concerns about child abuse or neglect following UCOBAC's reporting procedures.
- (vii) Take images of children/ young people that are dignified and respectful.

When producing publicity material featuring a child, seek consent from both the child and his or her parent or guardian. This consent should be written.
- (viii) Do not publish a story, or an image that might put the child, their siblings or peers at risk even when their identities are anonymous.

7. Recruitment and Screening of Staff and Volunteers

To ensure the safety of children, UCOBAC will:

- (i) Conduct background checks on all prospective staff, volunteers, interns, and partners who may come into contact with children.
- (ii) Include child protection clauses in employment contracts and partnership agreements.
- (iii) Provide child protection training for all staff, volunteers, and interns before beginning work with children.
- (iv) Commitment to organizational child protection/safeguarding policy is a condition of employment.

8. Reporting and Responding to Child Protection Concerns

(i) Reporting

Any individual who suspects or becomes aware of child abuse, exploitation, or neglect must report the concern to UCOBAC's Child Protection Officer (CPO) immediately.

(ii) Procedures for Reporting

- a) Reports can be made verbally or in writing to the Child Protection Officer.
- b) The report should include the details of the incident, the child involved, and any known or suspected perpetrators.
- c) The Child Protection Officer will maintain a confidential log of all reports.

(iii) Response

Upon receiving a report of child abuse, UCOBAC will:

1. **Investigate the claim:** The designated officer will lead an investigation, involving relevant authorities and partners where appropriate.
2. **Provide support:** Immediate action will be taken to protect the child, including providing medical, psychological, or legal support where necessary.
3. **Take disciplinary action:** If the allegation involves a UCOBAC staff, volunteers, or partners, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, including suspension or termination of employment or partnership where applicable.
4. **Legal Action:** If the incident constitutes a criminal offense, UCOBAC will report the matter to law enforcement authorities for further investigation and prosecution.

9. Confidentiality

- All child protection concerns will be handled with the utmost confidentiality to protect the privacy and safety of the child and individuals involved. Only those directly involved in the case will have access to the information, and it will be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- **The disclosure of personal information about children will be restricted to only that staff who need to know.**

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

UCOBAC will:

- (a) Regularly review and update the Child Protection Policy to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
- (b) Conduct regular training and refresher courses for staff, volunteers, and partners on child protection.
- (c) Monitor child protection practices in all UCOBAC projects to ensure compliance with this policy.

11. Partnerships and Collaboration

UCOBAC will work closely with national child protection agencies, local authorities, communities, and international organizations to strengthen child protection mechanisms. Where necessary, UCOBAC will refer cases to specialized child protection services for further support.

12. Implementation and Training

This policy will be implemented through:

- (a) Mandatory child protection training for all UCOBAC staff, volunteers, and partners.
- (b) Clear communication of the policy to all stakeholders.
- (c) Regular audits to ensure compliance with child protection practices.
- (d) Providing all staff an opportunity to learn how to recognize and respond to the consequences of child abuse.
- (e) Publicizing, promoting and distributing the policy widely?

13. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years or sooner, if necessary, to adapt to any changes in legal frameworks, child protection practices, or organizational needs.

14. Policy Acceptance and Acknowledgment

All UCOBAC staff, volunteers, and partners must sign an acknowledgment form to confirm they have read, understood, and agreed to comply with the Child Protection Policy.



15. COMMUNICATION GUIDELINE

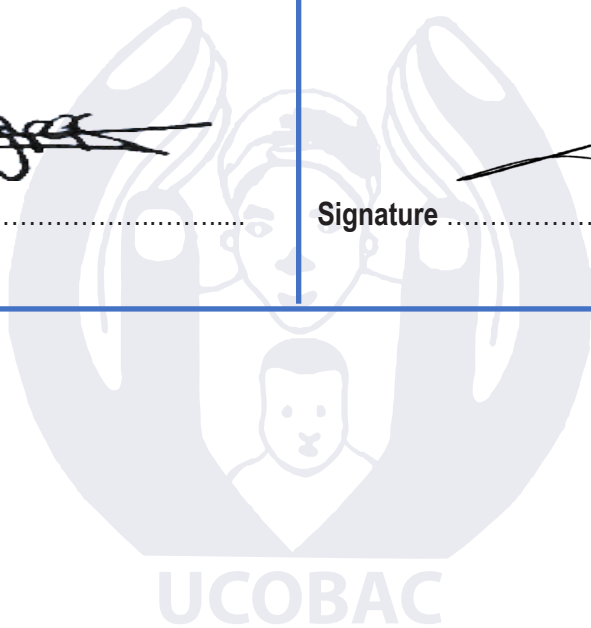
- All staff working with children shall provide accurate representation of children. Avoid sensationalizing text or images.
- Staff, volunteers, partners shall use appropriate use of language. Avoid degrading, victimizing or shaming language)
- All staff shall ensure the use of dignified images by ensuring that children are appropriately clothed and not in sexually provocative poses.
- No personal or physical information to identify location of a child that could put them at risk to be put in communications
- Staff/volunteers shall seek Permission from children before taking photos.
- Staff/volunteers shall acquire permission from the child or guardian before using images or case studies for publicity, fundraising or awareness raising?
- Staff shall establish a system of signed consent for use of pictures and other visual materials by external individuals and organizations that include the ramifications of misconduct.

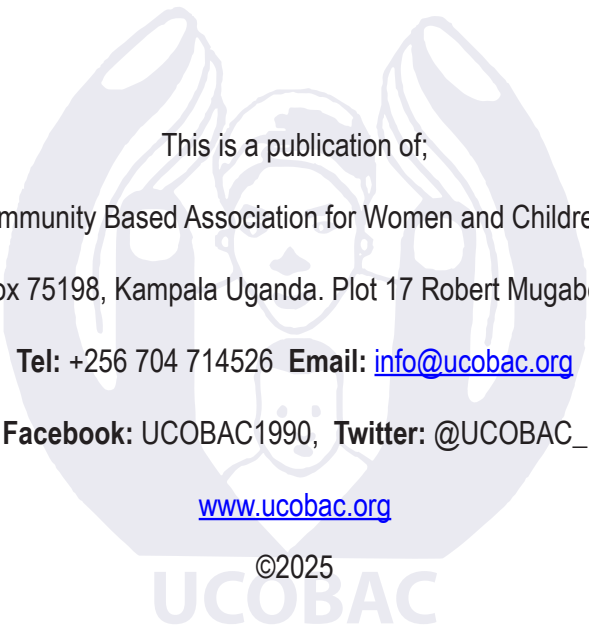
APPROVAL OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy shall take effect immediately upon approval and shall remain in force until revised or revoked by the Board of Directors.

Approved by:

<p>Name: Grace Angeline Chelimo Title: Board Chairperson</p>  <p>Signature</p>	<p>Name: Frances Birungi Odong Title: Executive Director</p>  <p>Signature</p>
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This is a publication of;

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