



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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PREAMBLE

This policy statement affirms SAYWHAT's commitment to children's welfare and protection from abuse and exploitation.

Consistent with SAYWHAT's vision, mission and core values of respect, integrity, and accountability, we seek to create and maintain an organisational environment free of harassment and exploitation and to ensure the same in all of our work with the communities that we work with. Each community member with whom SAYWHAT works or aids must have SAYWHAT's utmost assurance that they will not be subject to harassment or exploitation.

The children in the communities we work with are particularly vulnerable. There is a growing awareness that various groups and sections of society are prone to abusing children in several ways. This policy aims to deter, minimise and remove child abuse opportunities in our programs and projects.

This policy shall apply to all activities and programmes conducted by SAYWHAT as well as individuals and institutions which interact with SAYWHAT, including but not limited to;

- All SAYWHAT employees.
- Individual persons with business relations with SAYWHAT, including those with contractual obligations with SAYWHAT, legal services providers, consultants, volunteers, interns, and technical partners.

SAYWHAT is committed to having child-safe programs.

Requirements for SAYWHAT are included in Annex 1 and 2, respectively.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide SAYWHAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and practices:

A. Best interests of the child

In all actions concerning children and when dealing with a concern for a child's safety or wellbeing, the child's best interests shall be our primary consideration. SAYWHAT believes children have the right to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives; they can make choices and decisions; they have the right to share the power adults hold and have a voice to influence people and events. Decisions about children and young people will be made as far as possible with their participation and in their best interest, considering how such decisions will affect them. Sometimes, adults have to make decisions for children to protect them from harm, but their best interest will be at the heart of those decisions. If this policy is breached, causing harm, SAYWHAT is committed to listening and acting according to the child's wishes. Confidentiality may be breached through sharing information if, following a risk analysis; there is a requirement to do so to protect a child from harm.

B. Zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation

SAYWHAT has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and exploitation. This is enacted via robust prevention and response work, supporting survivors and holding those responsible for the harm and intolerable behaviour accountable. SAYWHAT will ensure all those associated with the delivery of our work have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of child exploitation, abuse or other breaches of this policy and will take immediate action upon report of any suspected breach. SAYWHAT will not knowingly engage personnel to be in direct or indirect contact with children or access communities we work with if they pose a risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

C. Shared Responsibilities

SAYWHAT believes child safeguarding is a shared responsibility, meaning that successful implementation of child safeguarding measures is reliant on all those associated with the delivery of our work having access to this policy and guidance for its best-practice implementation; knowing and understanding their responsibilities and commitment to upholding child safeguarding principles. SAYWHAT will ensure all those who work on behalf of the organization with children and vulnerable populations will receive training about Child Safeguarding. This training will be carried out regularly. In addition, those with specific responsibilities will receive additional training commensurate with their role.

SAYWHAT will also ensure that all partner organizations involved in delivering our work have appropriate child safeguarding measures to implement the minimum standards outlined in this Policy.

D. Risk management approach

SAYWHAT has a duty of care to provide protective environments for children in all operations and activities. SAYWHAT will act with intention and foresight to ensure child safeguarding risks are identified, monitored, and mitigated against in the assessment of its operations and partner operations- to prevent the risk of a child being abused, exploited or harmed. A risk management approach does not diminish the fact SAYWHAT has a zero-tolerance approach to breaches of this policy. It is expected that child safeguarding will be considered when planning a program as well as during.

E Accountability and Openness

SAYWHAT will continue strengthening its child safeguarding systems to ensure accountability to children, their families and the communities in which it works. Specific child safeguarding roles and responsibilities will be delegated to staff to effectively embed child- safe organisational practice across all programs, operations and activities. SAYWHAT will ensure an organisational child- safe culture which is transparent about safeguarding issues occurring within SAYWHAT, in line with privacy regulations and within legal frameworks, and where any issues or concerns of child safeguarding or poor practice can be raised and discussed.

F. Confidentiality

SAYWHAT is committed to confidentiality in sharing sensitive information concerning child safeguarding incidents reported to us. Information that identifies individuals will only be shared with due consideration to the child's safety, witnesses or subject of complaint, or to protect the integrity of an investigation.

G. Commitment and Good Practice

SAYWHAT commits to creating and maintaining a safe organisational culture where all those whom SAYWHAT serves and who work for SAYWHAT feel empowered to insist on non- discriminatory and respectful behavior from each other, where poor behavior is not accepted, and where power is not abused. Safeguarding children within SAYWHAT's work is our responsibility and must be considered in every aspect of our work. A commitment to good practice is expected of all SAYWHAT's employees. SAYWHAT Safeguarding advisors and teams strive to offer the best service and advice possible and to stay appraised of sectoral and general best practices in Child Safeguarding. SAYWHAT is open to feedback, continual learning, and improvement to ensure that safeguarding children is at the center of our work

Application and Definitions

The policy applies to all SAYWHAT stakeholders:

- All staff
- All contractors, e.g., consultants
- All volunteers and interns
- All Board members
- All Funding Partners

Definitions

- **Child**

Any person under eighteen (18) years as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- **Child Rights**

Children have the “right to life, survival and development, “ which encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

- **Child Safeguarding**

The policies, procedures and practices employed to safeguard children who come into contact with Oxfam and all those associated with the delivery of our work from all forms of harm, abuse or exploitation and the responsibility of all personnel to embed these at the activity level to ensure Oxfam is a child safe organization.

- **Child Protection**

The prevention of and response to significant harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Child Protection programming is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from all forms of violence. This includes the integration of child protection into all thematic areas of programming to enhance the protective environments for children in the community.

- **Child Abuse**

Child abuse involves the abuse of children’s rights. It includes all forms of violence against children: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, family violence, sexual exploitation, abduction and trafficking, including for sexual purposes, involvement of a child in online child sexual exploitation and child labour as defined below.

- **Physical Abuse**

When a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. It also includes cultural practices which can alter physicality in ways that cause distress, harm and/or cause lasting health ramifications such as Female Genital Mutilation.

- **Neglect**

The persistent failure, where there are means, or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child’s health and development is placed at risk.

- **Emotional Abuse**

A persistent attack on a child's self-esteem. Examples include, but are not limited to – name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, shaming, intimidating or isolating the child.

- **Child Sexual Abuse**

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.

- **Family violence**

Includes verbal, physical, sexual or emotional violence within the household or family, which the child witnesses, usually regularly.

- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is targeted as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.

- **Online Child Sexual Exploitation**

Includes all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that have at some stage, connection to the online environment. It includes any use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) that results in sexual exploitation or causes a child to be sexually exploited or results in or causes images or other material documenting such sexual exploitation to be produced, bought, sold, possessed, distributed or transmitted.

- **Child Marriage**

A formal marriage or informal union before age 18, is a reality for both boys and girls, although girls are disproportionately the most affected. Child marriage is widespread and can lead to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation.

- **Grooming**

Generally, refers to behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. For example, an offender may build a relationship of trust with the child, and then seek to sexualise that relationship (for example favouring a child, isolating a child, giving excessive attention or gifts, using sexualised language or physical contact, or exposing the child to sexual concepts through online sexual exploitation material).

- **Online-Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse**

The act of sending an electronic message to a recipient who the sender believes to be under 18 years of age, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender; or of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient who the sender believes to be under 18 years of age.

- **Child Labour**

Often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling and recreation. In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families and exposed to serious hazards and illnesses.

- **Child Trafficking**

Relates to any role in the recruitment, transportation or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation, by means of threat, force or other forms of coercion. This includes abuse of power.

- **Military use of Children**

Where children are engaged in or exposed to military activity, including as soldiers or human shield.

- **Contact with Children**

Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve direct (including online contact with children) or indirect contact (such as use of children's images) with children. This can be either under the position description or as a result of performing the position such as coming into contact with children when working in communities.

- **Working with Children**

Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work.

Awareness

SAYWHAT will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

2.1 Training and Development

All staff will receive information relating to SAYWHAT's Child Protection Policy during the induction process. Further training will be provided in general as well as at a departmental level, tailored to the needs of the department, of specific areas of responsibility as appropriate.

Prevention

SAYWHAT will ensure that through awareness and personal and professional conduct, that staff and others minimize the risk to children.

3.1 Vigilance in Recruitment and Selection

The Management and Administration team adheres by strict guidelines in the recruiting process of new staff, consultants, volunteers and interns. The recruitment guidelines will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they accurately reflect child safe recruiting and screening standards. The recruitment guidelines will include:

- A clear and bold statement that confirms SAYWHAT's commitment to child protection in all advertising
- Adopting 'best practice' recruitment and selection techniques
- Conducting reference checks
- Conducting police checks where required and feasible

3.2 Police Checks

All personnel will be asked to sign an authority for a police check. In addition, police checks will be conducted for all full-time, part-time and long-term contract employees, regardless of whether or not they work with children

Code of Conduct

All staff, consultants and volunteers will be expected to sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct for the Protection of the Child (see Attachment 3).

3.4 Use of Child Photos and Information

Pictures, images, or other likenesses of children and/or information related to children that could compromise their care and protection will not be made available through any form of communication media without proper protection and understanding of their use. Moreover, any images of children should not be accompanied by detailed information relating to their place of residence. Images with corresponding text which may identify a child should be removed.

Reporting

SAYWHAT will ensure that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

4.1 Incident reporting

It is mandatory for any allegation, belief or suspicion of sexual or physical abuse (past or present) by a SAYWHAT employee, sponsor, donor, board member or other partner to be reported immediately to the Human Resource Department, SAYWHAT Call Centre 577 or the Executive Director.

If a child reports an incident, the child must be taken seriously and listened to carefully. Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or victimization. Where appropriate, the family of the child victim should be informed of the allegation and action proposed and they should be consulted Where possible as to the process to be followed this process will be steered and guided by the Executive Director and Human Resource Officer

4.2 Document the incident

As soon as possible (within a period of 48 hours of the disclosure), the staff member receiving the disclosure needs to have fully documented the allegation, including the time, place, witnesses. This report will possibly be used in court if charges are forthcoming.

All reports should be submitted to the Executive Director in writing immediately if any staff member is alleged to have committed or been arrested for, or convicted of, criminal offences relating to child abuse or child pornography.

The Executive Director will consult with legal counsel and appropriate bodies (e.g., The Zimbabwe Republic Police, or Child Welfare Department), to ascertain due process and steer participants accordingly, subject to the incident reported.

Responding

SAYWHAT will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

5.1 Distance the alleged perpetrator

The best interests of the child may warrant the standing down of a staff member or volunteer while an investigation commences. Staff members stood down receive full pay and are entitled to a just process that does not pre-suppose guilt or innocence. The allegations should not be discussed or communicated to other people until such have been considered and a decision made by management. The decision made should be documented and filed.

5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective reporting procedure. It is unacceptable and potentially defamatory for concerns of child abuse (and abusers) to be spread throughout the organization rather than being directed through a formal complaints process. All participants must understand the importance of following the set reporting lines when concerns arise. Confidentiality protects the child, the notifier, the respondent and the organization, and ensures a fair and proper process.

5.3 Reprisal

SAYWHAT will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against any employee who reports any form of abuse or exploitation, provides any information or other assistance in an investigation.

5.4 Counselling support

Professional counselling support will be made available to all parties involved.

5.5 Investigation of complaints

Physical and/or sexual abuse of a child is a crime. Organizations may be required to notify authorities when there are reasonable grounds for reporting abuse.

Allegations made outside the country will need to consider national legislation or internal procedures to investigate and address the allegations.²

² Consideration needs to be given how the local authorities will treat the alleged perpetrator (e.g., torture, death penalty, corrupt justice systems) as well as the child (e.g., will the child be victimized, criminalized or forced to undergo medical checks).

Internal investigations will consider a confidential, thorough, impartial and prompt process. The investigation may consist of interviews with witnesses and others as appropriate, collection of information about the alleged conduct, gathering of documentation, or other procedures as appropriate. The individual alleged to have violated this SAYWHAT policy would have the opportunity to present his or her view of the events in question. SAYWHAT will hold its determination until the investigation is completed.

Review of this Policy

SAYWHAT will review this policy every five years or earlier if warranted.

ANNEX

Annex 1 Child Protection Requirements for SAYWHAT

Annex 2 Code of Conduct for the Protection of the Child

Annex 1

Child Protection Requirements for SAYWHAT

SAYWHAT must have the following:

- A child protection policy that complies with funding partner standards and SAYWHAT's standards³
- child-safe recruitment and screening processes, including criminal record checks prior to engagement, targeted interview questions and verbal referee checks, for all personnel (including volunteers) who will be working with children
- A documented child protection complaints management procedure
- Regular provision of child protection training for relevant personnel
- A child protection code of conduct that must be signed by all personnel
- A provision in all employment contracts that the organization has the right to dismiss the employee or transfer the employee to other duties if he/she breaches the child protection code of conduct
- A documented policy compliance regime, including specified sanctions for breaches
- a reporting mechanism where the Executive Director is informed promptly in writing if any of the personnel is alleged to have committed, or been arrested for, or convicted of, criminal offences relating to child abuse or child pornography
- Child protection strategies incorporated into project risk management processes
- This will involve adopting and endorsing the SAYWHAT Child Protection Policy.

Annex 2

Code of Conduct for the Protection of the Child

INTRODUCTION

SAYWHAT's capacity to ensure the protection of and assistance to the children that we work with depends on the ability of its staff to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. We, the staff members of SAYWHAT, are personally and collectively responsible for maintaining these standards. Managers are responsible for upholding these standards, setting a good example, and creating a working environment that supports and empowers staff.

It is recognized that SAYWHAT's work often puts its staff in positions of power in relation to its children that we work with. Staff has an obligation not to abuse this power.

This Code of Conduct is intended to serve as an illustrative guide for staff to make ethical decisions in their professional lives, and at times in their private lives.

While acknowledging that local laws and customs may differ from one country to another, the Code of Conduct is based on international legal standards.

The Code applies to all SAYWHAT staff members, who will be requested to sign it. Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be seen as a serious concern and may result in disciplinary action or dismissal, in accordance with SAYWHAT's disciplinary procedures. Consultants, volunteers and interns will also receive the Code and be requested to confirm that they uphold its standards.

All SAYWHAT staff is responsible for encouraging, advocating and promoting the dissemination of the Code of Conduct. They also have a role in implementing, monitoring and enforcing its standards. Staff is also urged to encourage partners to adhere to these standards and join SAYWHAT staff to uphold them.

As a staff member of SAYWHAT, I commit myself to:

1. Treat all children fairly and with respect and dignity, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or another status.

I will always seek to care for and protect the rights of children and act in a manner that ensures that their best interests shall be the paramount consideration.

2. Uphold the integrity of SAYWHAT by ensuring that my personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standard.

I will demonstrate integrity, truthfulness, dedication and honesty in my actions. I will be patient, respectful and courteous to all persons with whom I deal in any capacity, including children.

I recognize that my personal conduct will reflect on SAYWHAT's reputation and may impact on community perceptions; therefore, I will refrain from inappropriate behavior that may be compromising or detrimental to SAYWHAT.

3. Safeguard and make responsible use of the information and resources to which I have access by reason of my employment with SAYWHAT.

I will exercise due care in all matters of official business, and not divulge any confidential information about a child and other work-related matters in accordance with the staff regulations and rules and current guidelines.

I will protect, manage and utilize SAYWHAT human, financial and material resources appropriately. I will never use SAYWHAT resources to exploit or harass children or access child pornography. When photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, I must:

- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and Endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or parent or guardian of the child. As part of this, I must explain how the photograph or film will be used.

As a staff member of SAYWHAT, I commit myself to:

1. Treat all children fairly, and with respect and dignity, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

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- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and Endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child, parent, or guardian. As part of this, I must explain how the photograph or film will be used.
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDS present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be sexually suggestive.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child.

4. Prevent, oppose and combat all exploitation and abuse of the child

I undertake not to abuse power and influence that I have by virtue of my position over the life and well-being of a child.

I will report any child abuse by a SAYWHAT staff member, consultant, volunteer, intern or partner.

I will not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.

I will never request any service or favor from a child in return for protection or assistance. I will never engage in any exploitative relationships – sexual, emotional, financial or employment-related – with a child.

I will refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury. I will report in writing on the nature and conditions of this employment to my supervisor.

Wherever possible, I will ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.

I will not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or physical danger.

5. Refrain from any involvement in criminal or unethical activities, activities that contravene human rights, or activities that compromise the image and interests of SAYWHAT.

I will neither support nor take part in any form of illegal, exploitative or abusive activities, including, for example, child labour, child pornography and trafficking of human beings and commodities.

I will not engage children under 18 in sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts. This is regardless of the local age of consent, i.e., the local or national laws of the country where I work. Ignorance or mistaken belief of the child's age is not a defense. Failure to report such a relationship may lead to disciplinary action pursuant to SAYWHAT's policies and procedures.

I have received and read the SAYWHAT Code of Conduct for the Protection of the Child.

(PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE)

(DATE)

THUS DONE and SIGNED at HARARE on this day

.....

.....

BOARD CHAIRPERSON

.....

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Review schedule:

