



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Summary

SOPA International is a non-profit peace organization working for peace and non-violence; sustainable development and a friendly world. We recognize that we have a fundamental duty of care towards children and we acknowledge our responsibilities to keep children safe while engaged in our programs and activities.

SOPA is committed to promoting the rights of children including their right to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation within our work environment and communities at large.

We oppose all forms of abuse intentional and unintentional (including physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect), discrimination, exploitation, and manipulation of children as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and under the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya.

SOPA acknowledges its expectation that its employees and stakeholders who work with SOPA have children's best interests at the heart of their involvement with SOPA.

This Child Protection Policy is SOPA's statement of intent that demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all persons in the organization and who come into contact with us what is required in relation to the protection of children, and that child abuse in any form is unacceptable to SOPA.

1.0 Seeds of Peace Africa International's Commitment to Children

We are committed to:

Responsibility: Recognizing that child protection is our responsibility, whether or not our individual roles involve working directly with children and youth;

Accountability: Actively holding ourselves and other SOPA Team Members accountable to SOPA child protection standards;

Behavior: Acting as role models of child-friendly behaviours and practices;

Equality: Treating all children and youth equally with respect and fairness regardless of age, culture, caste, nationality, creed, ethnicity, health status (e.g. AIDS), physical and psychological ability, family situation, sex, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and /or sexual orientation;

Participation: Ensuring that children are supported to practice their right to express views on all matters which affect them and their surroundings. Their views will be adequately taken into consideration;

Practices: Prohibiting corporal punishment, offensive or abusive language (including teasing and taunting), and the use of gestures or symbols that could be interpreted as insulting or provocative. We encourage positive strategies to manage children;

Confidentiality: Keeping details of the victims of abuse in reported cases of abuse confidential;

Partnership: Working in partnership with governments, communities, partner agencies, children and families to promote the welfare, health and development of children, and to protect them from harm.

2.0 Definitions

a) Child: In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been signed and ratified by all countries where Seeds of Peace Africa International currently operates, a child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years.

b) Child Abuse: Consists of anything which individuals, care givers, care takers, duty bearers, institutions or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

There are four major categories of abuse: emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a child experiencing physical abuse is likely experiencing emotional abuse as well.

1. Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child which can cause severe impacts on the child's emotional development. This could include making a child feel worthless or unloved, inadequate or not valued.

2. Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child.

3. Neglect: Neglect involves the deliberate, persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. As well as being the result of a deliberate act, neglect can also be caused through the omission or the failure to act or protect.

4. Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in physically sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening. This definition also holds whether or not there has been physical contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated or consented to the behavior.

c) Child Protection: Within the scope of this policy, is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that Seeds of Peace Africa International undertakes to safeguard children.

d) Discrimination of the child: Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on any ground such as, the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property,

disability, birth or other status and which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of all rights and freedoms.

e) Exploitation: Child exploitation is the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment. It includes child labour, sexual purposes or child trafficking.

f) Manipulation: A type of social influence that aims to change the perception or behaviour of others through underhanded, devious and unfair tactics. Manipulation can be used to exploit and abuse children.

g) "Partner" includes any organization with which Seeds of Peace Africa International has formed a partnership agreement.

h) "Team Member" includes all Seeds of Peace Africa International employees, consultants, contractors, coaches, leaders and volunteers employed by, or working with Seeds of Peace Africa International and, where possible, individuals employed by, or working for, an implementing partner.

3.0 Scope of the Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working for or associated with SOPA. It encompasses the whole of SOPA and includes without limitation:

1. Employees, consultants, contractors, coaches, leaders and volunteers employed by or working with Seeds of Peace Africa International.
2. Field based offices where possible, to individuals employed by or working for an implementing partner (all such persons collectively referred to as "Team Members").
3. Board members, and any other representatives of Seeds of Peace Africa International who are visiting the field (collectively referred to as "representatives").

Seeds of Peace Africa International encourages Team Members and representatives to take measures to protect all children; however this Policy is meant specifically to protect the children and youth with whom Seeds of Peace Africa International works for any amount of time. It covers instances of abuse that occur inside and outside of project hours and locations, either witnessed or suspected by a Team Member or representative, or as disclosed to a Team

Member or representative. This policy may also apply to Partners, Funders and Vendors working with Seeds of Peace Africa International, as part of a partnership agreement.

4.0 Responsibilities under the Child Protection Policy

Seeds of Peace Africa International embraces its responsibility to provide equal rights and opportunities to all children without discrimination or unequal treatment. In order to uphold the commitment to keeping children safe, all Seeds of Peace Africa International Team Members and representatives are required to:

- ✚ Adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy;
- ✚ Demonstrate a duty of care to the children with whom they work;
- ✚ Meet minimum standards of protection for the children in their care;
- ✚ Report concerns of abuse of children;
- ✚ Take seriously, and respond swiftly and appropriately to, all suspicions and allegations of abuse while maintaining confidentiality;
- ✚ Sign the *Attestation of Commitment to Child Protection Form*;
- ✚ Complete and sign the *Self-Declaration Form*; and
- ✚ Follow Seeds of Peace Africa International's *Child Protection Photography Guidelines* when taking photos, videos, and conducting interviews with children.

4.1 Responsibility of Management

Management is accountable for ensuring that organizational procedures related to child abuse and child protection are integrated into existing management processes and that all SOPA Team Members and representatives are in compliance with this Child Protection Policy. Take necessary disciplinary measures in the event that team members or representatives are implicated in child abuse.

4.2.1 Recruitment

Human Resources department should ensure that the following recruitment practices are carried out for all employees:

- ✚ Conduct vulnerable sector checks or police checks to screen for abuse of vulnerable persons prior to employment where appropriate;
- ✚ Conduct 3 reference checks that include questions on child protection protocol issues;
- ✚ Include child protection focused questions in all interviews; and
- ✚ Obtain completed and signed *Self-Declaration Forms* disclosing any prior convictions

4.2.2 Orientation

Human Resources

- ✚ Provide all employees with an orientation session and materials where Seeds of Peace Africa International’s Child Protection Policy is reviewed in detail.
- ✚ Ask employees to read the *Child Protection Policy* and obtain their signed *Attestation of Commitment to Child Protection Forms*.

4.2.3 Education and Training

Training Officer/ Designate in Charge

- ✚ Ensure the provision of “Code of Conduct Training” as part of all initial training sessions;
- ✚ Encourage the leaders/trainers to sign the *Code of Conduct* at the end of the training session; and
- ✚ Conduct Child Protection training for staff at least every two years.

4.2.4 Implementation

Executive Director, Program Manager and Team Leaders

Ensure that:

- ✚ All direct reports act in compliance with this Policy;
- ✚ All direct reports receive orientation, training and regular updates on systems, procedures, knowledge and skills required to implement the Policy;
- ✚ All direct reports sign the *Seeds of Peace Africa International Code of Conduct* (which includes the Child Protection Policy) annually;

- ✚ Processes for responding to abuse are developed and implemented in Seeds of Peace Africa International locations and these reflect the approach and principles outlined in this Policy;
- ✚ Monitoring and review systems are put in place; and
- ✚ Resource needs for implementation are identified and met.

Team Leaders will additionally

Ensure that:

Project level Child Protection Focal Persons are designated;

- ✚ Children and parents/guardians are informed of the policies and procedures, and means of contacting Seeds of Peace Africa International directly for concerns about child abuse;
- ✚ Children are provided with information on where to go locally for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying;
- ✚ All projects are in compliance with this policy; and
- ✚ All direct reports are asked about Child Protection Policy compliance on a regular basis.

4.2.5 Communications

Executive Director, Program Manager and Team Leaders

Ensure that all SOPA Team Members and representatives:

- ✚ Respect and protect the best interest of the child(ren) when interviewing, photographing and developing communications and media pieces as outlined in the *Child Protection Photography Guidelines*;
- ✚ Ensure that professional photographers sign the *Photographer's Agreement Form* prior to taking photographs and videos; and
- ✚ Obtain completed and signed *Child-friendly Interview and Photography Consent Forms* or verbal consent from the child (ren) and their parent(s)/guardian(s), whenever possible, prior to conducting interviews or taking and using photographs or video footage of children.

4.2.6 Monitoring

Human Resource

- ✚ Monitor and respond to reports submitted on Child Protection
- ✚ Maintain records of all reports of child abuse; and
- ✚ Review Child Protection Policy violations on a regular basis and revise procedures and protocol to ensure the safeguarding of children.

Board of Directors

Ensure that:

- ✚ This Policy and its implementation is regularly reviewed:
- ✚ In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within Seeds of Peace Africa International;
- ✚ Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within Seeds of Peace Africa International; and
- ✚ In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

4.2.7 Reporting

Executive Director, Program Manager and Team Leaders

- ✚ Ensure that allegations of child abuse are documented in detail and reported to Seeds of Peace Africa International Head Office within 12 hours of receipt; and
- ✚ Oversee the investigation and resulting action of reported incidents.

4.2.8 Partner Organizations, Funders and Vendors

Executive Director, Program Manager and Team Leaders

Ensure that:

- ✚ When establishing a partnership agreement or a relationship with funders and vendors, an assessment of the partner's Child Protection Policy and/or practices is completed, and a decision is made whether or not the partner employees or volunteers involved in Seeds of Peace Africa International programs will be required to adhere to Seeds of Peace Africa International's Child Protection Policy;

- ✚ All agreements and memorandums of understanding with partners, contractors or other representatives who are in contact with children include a clause stating the partner's commitment to Seeds of Peace Africa International's Child Protection Policy or their own comparable policy; and
- ✚ All employees, volunteers and representatives of the partner implementing or participating in Seeds of Peace Africa International programs agree to adhere to Seeds of Peace Africa International's Child Protection Policy, or their comparable policy

5.0 Core Standards of Practice

For all Seeds of Peace Africa International Team Members Working with Children

- ✚ Respond to and report actual or suspected concerns, suspicions or violations regarding any kind of abuse or exploitation by a colleague, family member or community partner. These concerns must be reported in accordance with the systems and policies outlined in this policy;
- ✚ Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given;
- ✚ Ensure that all Seeds of Peace Africa International sessions are safe;
- ✚ Ensure that child rights are protected and that the Child Protection Photography Guidelines are followed when photos or videos are being taken of children, or when interviews are being conducted with them;
- ✚ Always work in an open environment and avoid being alone with one child. Ensure any private conversation with a child is in plain view of others;
- ✚ Where possible, obtain written parental or guardian consent if Seeds of Peace Africa International is transporting children to an event; and
- ✚ Where possible, secure parental consent in writing to act in the place of the parent or guardian, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.

6.0 Procedure for Responding to Child Abuse

Procedure for a Team Member, or representative, reporting suspected child abuse

If you witness or suspect child abuse, or if a child discloses abuse to you, follow the legal obligations of the country (Kenya) or your country (including any reporting obligations that may exist), and report the incident to your Team Leader or Program Manager or Director. The Team Leader or Program Manager or Director to whom you should submit your report will be the Team Leader or Program Manager or Director at the highest level where you work. In many cases, this will be the Team Leader or Program Manager or Director. If you are a X Coach/Leader/Teacher working with SOPA, the incident should be reported to your Supervisor. Any response beyond reporting the incident to your relevant persons in charge will vary depending on the local procedures.

When child abuse is suspected, witnessed or reported, the following steps are to be taken:

Step 1: Ensure Safety of the Child

- ✚ Put the child first. If a child reports an incident:
- ✚ Listen to him/her calmly and take him/her seriously;
- ✚ Never be alone with the child. If the child prefers to discuss the situation with one individual, ensure a secondary adult is in close vicinity;
- ✚ Consider if the perpetrator of abuse is male or female when determining who will speak to the child;
- ✚ Reassure the child that he/she is not to blame;
- ✚ Be honest. Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you may have to share their secret with someone who will be able to help them. Inform the child of the steps you will take. Tell the child you believe them and are glad that they told you;
- ✚ Make sure you are clear about what the child says before you report it;
- ✚ To ensure trust and comfort of the child, do not write/ tape record information while speaking with the child. When the child is no longer in your presence record what the child said in clear and accurate detail; and
- ✚ Maintain a level of confidentiality; only discuss the matter with those necessary to protect the child, do not disclose unnecessary details.

Step 2: Report the incident to your Team Leader or Program Manager or Director Manager/Director using the *Child Protection Reporting Form*

Complete the *Child Protection Reporting Form* in detail and send it to your Team Leader or Program Manager or Director within 24 hours.

Or

If you are not comfortable reporting the suspected incident of abuse to your Team Leader or Program Manager or Director, or if you do not have a Team Leader or Program Manager or Director (volunteer) you should report the incident through the anonymous info@sopa.or.ke , or phone using the **Seeds of Peace Africa International official number**

Step 3: Team Leader or Program Manager or Director receiving the report clarifies information as necessary and then reports the incident by bringing to attention the ***Child Protection Reporting Form*** to management immediately (not beyond 24 hours of the incident). If the child is in serious danger the Team Leader or Program Manager or Director first step is to take immediate necessary action to ensure the safety of the child.

The Team Leader or Program Manager or Director will take necessary steps to ensure that the case is reported to the authorities and necessary action is taken. He/she will ensure that the privacy of any victim of abuse shall be respected, and will treat any information relating to any victim of abuse as highly confidential of all child protection reporting forms.

7.0 Consequences of Violations of this Policy

If a Seeds of Peace Africa International Team Member or representative contravenes this policy, whether within or outside the context of our work, in ways that are criminal, grossly infringe children's rights, or contravene the principles and standards contained in this document, Seeds of Peace Africa International will take immediate disciplinary action and any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances. This may mean, for:

- ✚ **Staff:** disciplinary action up to and including termination
- ✚ **Coaches/Leaders//Board Members/ and any other volunteers:** disciplinary action up to and including ending the relationship
- ✚ **Partners:** possible withdrawal of funding/support
- ✚ **Contractors:** possible termination of contract

In all cases, Seeds of Peace Africa International will involve local authorities where appropriate, such as the police or child welfare agencies, community leaders to ensure the protection of children.

8.0 Personal Conduct outside Work

We are committed to ensuring that our Staff and representatives apply high standards of behavior towards children within both their professional and their private lives.

SOPA does not intend to dictate the belief and value systems by which SOPA employees conduct their personal lives. SOPA's position is dependent, however, on maintaining good relations and upholding its reputation as a child-focused community development organization with numerous countries and organizations. Unlawful or other conduct by SOPA employees which jeopardises SOPA's reputation or position whether during or after business hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse; any other unlawful activity; sexual harassment; physically/verbally abusive behavior; and public disorderly conduct.

Staff and Associates are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behaviour may be perceived both at work and outside work.

Attestation of Commitment to Child Protection Form

I, < name> _____, have read, understood and agree to abide by the contents of Seeds of Peace Africa International's Child Protection Policy.

Name: _____ TL/PM/Director Name: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____