



YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

YIDA SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Safeguarding children that we come into contact with throughout our work is a key priority for youth Initiative for Development in Africa (YIDA).

Within YIDA, Safeguarding is making YIDA safe for children and youth. It is our individual and collective responsibility to ensure all children and youth are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk of, or actual, harm caused by YIDA staff, representatives, partners, volunteers, contractors and visitors to our country programs.

YIDA acknowledges fully the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of youth and children, and ensure all our safeguarding measures are embedded, accessible and communicated clearly to staff, partners, children, youth and their communities, in a language they understand.

YIDA is aware that there may be additional vulnerabilities facing children and youth associated with their age, socio-economic background, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, identity, sexual orientation or identity, and is committed to ensuring this does not form barriers to effective safeguarding.

YIDA will take all reasonable steps to make itself safe, both as an organisation and in the conduct of all aspects of its day-to-day operations of emergency, humanitarian policy and campaigning work.

All YIDA staff, trustees and all others involved in the work of YIDA including, but not limited to, secondees volunteers, interns, and third parties connected with YIDA, including partners, implementing partners, consultants, contractors, and visitors to Country Offices.

YIDA commits to:

- ❖ valuing and listening to all children and young people;
- ❖ ensuring that all staff and people directly associated with our work understand their personal responsibility to prevent and report any form of child abuse and sexual exploitation of children;
- ❖ diligently implement our child safeguarding system by applying relevant policies, procedures, training and other learning opportunities across YIDA and with our partners and relevant third parties; ensuring that the organisation creates the right culture and a safe and trusted environment for anyone to report

POLICY STATEMENT

It is our policy to safeguard all children and youth involved in YIDA's work against risks of exploitation and abuse. YIDA will not tolerate exploitative or abusive behavior by anyone associated with the implementation of its work and highlights this as a core commitment in the organization's Stakeholder Accountability Framework.

YIDA recognizes that women, girls and boys in certain contexts may be considered more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than others, and we make every effort to eliminate such risks from our programs.



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YIDA particularly recognizes that the need to protect children and youths are of paramount importance. The vulnerability of children and youth to abuse is increased by many factors, including poverty, inequality, violence, cultural practices and humanitarian crises. Children who are exploited and abused are more likely to suffer long term consequences, including mental health issues, reduced educational outcomes, drug and alcohol abuse and increased likelihood of breaking the law. YIDA is committed to doing what it can to safeguard those children with whom it interacts, either directly or indirectly (e.g., through the activities of partner organisations), so that they can avail of their right to grow up in safety.

1.1 Scope

The scope of this policy document relates to the safeguarding of children and youth with whom YIDA staff and other personnel may come into contact while working on YIDA's programs. YIDA overarching commitment to protecting all children and youth those who may be deemed to be vulnerable in the course of its programs is set out in its position statement on exploitation and Abuse.

This policy applies to:

- ❖ All YIDA's employees
- ❖ All representatives working under a contractual arrangement with or on behalf of YIDA, e.g. consultants or other third parties;
- ❖ Any other official visitor to YIDA's programs e.g. supporters, donors, journalists and volunteers.

This policy does not apply directly to YIDA'S partners. It is, however, a minimum requirement of funding that partner organisations share a commitment to implement child safeguarding standards and develop their own policies and procedures to prevent and respond to risks of exploitation and abuse of children and youth in all their activities.

1.2 Commitment

YIDA recognises that abuse of power has led, and continues to lead, to many forms of exploitation and abuse. In the environment in which YIDA works, people can experience disempowerment due to a variety of factors. This can give rise to a power differential between the members of target communities and those directly or indirectly involved in delivering YIDA'S programs, namely YIDA'S staff and the staff of partner organization's.

YIDA recognises that there are specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks that exist for children and youth and is committed to make every effort to ensure children are safe and protected in its programmed work. YIDA's aim is to ensure that it operates best practice in terms of child safeguarding policies and recognizes the legal guidelines governing protection in each jurisdiction in which it works.

1.3 Guiding Documents and Principles

Our approach to child safeguarding work is guided by a number of key international principles and standards as set out in the following: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), the UN



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Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and in the national laws of the countries in which YIDA works. We also aim to uphold the commitments made under the "Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN personnel" and the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (PSEA) (ST/SGB/2003/13)¹. These commitments priorities key actions, including practical measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and to ensure an effective response when such acts occur.

The UNCRC is ratified in 193 states (except Somalia, South Sudan and the United States)². The four general principles of the UNCRC are: Survival and development, Non-discrimination, Child participation and the right to be heard, and Best interests of the child.

Of the 54 articles contained within the UNCRC, the most relevant statements to the current policy are detailed below:

Article 2: Children have the right to protection against discrimination.

Article 3: All adults should always do what is best for a child.

Article 12: Children have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.

Article 19: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

Where children are the main target population of a partner's activities, or form a substantial proportion of the target population, YIDA's staff should discuss the specific child safeguarding provisions that need to be put in place with the partner. These provisions should be rights-based, taking into account the provisions of the UNCRC and of rights enshrined in national legislation. Specialist agencies (e.g. Save the Children, UNICEF) working locally should be consulted to ensure that the most relevant safeguarding practices are adopted.

This policy outlines procedures to prevent and respond to potential incidents of exploitation and abuse to children and youth and fulfils our commitment to a 'do no harm' approach. Do no harm is a principle that has been used for a long time in the humanitarian sector It refers to an organisation's responsibility to minimise the harm it may cause inadvertently as a result of its programs and organizational activities.

1.4 Structure of the Policy Document

This document is set out in a manner that it should provide clear guidance to YIDA staff, and third parties regarding their responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children while they are working with YIDA on its programmes.

Section 1 of the document sets out YIDA'S clear commitment to safeguarding children and youth and it sets out in general terms to benchmarks within which it has set its safeguarding standards.

Section 2 focuses primarily on striving to ensure that cases of abuse do not arise by having robust safeguarding systems in place.



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Section 3 focuses on what field staff are expected to do when an issue arises, clearly setting out the roles and responsibilities of staff. In addition, it is also made clear that those in the field are not alone and that, when the need arises, there are systems in place to provide support and advice. At the same time, the specific responsibilities of staff, particularly in relation to their duty to report, is clearly set out.

SECTION 2

2.1 Definitions & Terminology

YIDA defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, and youth is any person between the age of 13 and 30. In this document the term Safeguarding pertains to the prevention of harm to children, while the term Protection relates to the response and support mechanisms that are in place should an allegation and/or incident of abuse arise.

There are four forms of Child Abuse which include; Physical abuse is actual or likely physical injury to a child such as hitting, kicking or shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child

Emotional Abuse:

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause several and persistent adverse effects on child's emotional development and psychosocial wellbeing. This includes humiliating and degrading treatment. (e.g. name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, confinement and limiting social interactions.)

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and the failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect refers to the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and /or psychological needs as referred to in the UNCRC.

Sexual abuse and exploitation occurs when an individual uses a child for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include, sexual intercourse with a child, intentional touching or molesting of a child, exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification in the presence of a child, sexual exploitation of a child including forcing, encouraging, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution. Sexual activity that occurs between an individual and a child/youth under the age of 18 is not acceptable in any circumstance, regardless of whether he/she may consent or if the individual is unaware of the child's/youth's age. This is irrespective of the age of consent in the residing country. It includes the inappropriate use of technology and social media; e.g., the storage or dissemination of pornography, the recording or sharing abusive images using technology such as via mobile phone texting, audio, video, images, podcasts, social networking websites and other multimedia or communications platforms.



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Child Labour is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It is work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. If a young person, under the age of 18 is part of an apprenticeship scheme within the statutory law of the country and does not meet any of the above, this would not be considered by YIDA as child labour. However, any contractor or sub-contractor must inform YIDA of the name of any apprentice who will be directly involved with our work.

For YIDA it is not acceptable for any staff or representatives to engage anyone under the age of 18 to work as domestic help in their place of work or at home.

2.2 Special Consideration for Humanitarian Crisis

YIDA's employees and representatives work in contexts where inequality and need can leave communities and individuals vulnerable or exposed to exploitation or abuse. It is recognised and well documented that such risks are heightened, in particular, during humanitarian crises. While every context differs, a humanitarian crisis is generally characterised by a breakdown in protective family and community structures, high levels of displacement and family separation, and extreme need – all of which can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and lead to increased risks of exploitation and abuse.

Child Safeguarding system is made up of four key areas: *Awareness, Prevention, Reporting and Response*. Each of these areas have activities that continue throughout the life cycle of our humanitarian work in the communities we operate in either directly or through partners. We adopt a child centered approach to child safeguarding.

2.3 Considerations for the local context

YIDA works in a variety of geographical locations with great variations in understandings and arrangements for child protection. There are even different understandings of what can constitute child abuse. YIDA is committed to giving clear guidance to staff, partners and other organizations, including funding organizations, on how the Child Safeguarding Policy will be adapted and applied in these different locations. These guidelines will therefore be applied in ways that are sensitive to different cultures but without condoning practices that are harmful to children.

SECTION 3

3 PREVENTION OF EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

In order to ensure that this policy is implemented and that steps are taken to safeguard children and youth, a number of procedures are in place to encourage a culture of safety and to prevent harm to children in the course of carrying out YIDA's work.

3.1 Safe Recruitment



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YIDA ensures that appropriate steps are taken during recruitment and selection of employees and representatives, to ensure that issues relating to safeguarding children are considered and addressed. The following have special considerations with reference to child safeguarding:

Job Advertisements: A note should be included in all job advertisements to highlight that YIDA aims to protect children against risks of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and implements a Child Safeguarding Policy.

Job Description: Child Safeguarding is referenced in all job descriptions and applies to all employees and representatives.

Interview: Questions in relation to Child Safeguarding should be included in all interviews. It is not expected that all new recruits would have an in-depth knowledge of Child Safeguarding unless it is a specific requirement of the role. However, it is important that all candidates are aware of YIDA's commitment to safeguarding children and the expectation that all employees recognise, report and respond to incidents of child exploitation and abuse.

Reference Checks: A thorough check of employment references is carried out and includes a question in relation to safeguarding, e.g. "YIDA" aims to protect all program participants involved in its work against risks of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation and abuse - do you have any reason to deem this person unsuitable to work with children or adults who may be vulnerable?".

3.2 Code of Conduct

YIDA's Code of Conduct expresses the expectations of YIDA for all employees, volunteers, consultants and third parties regarding the conduct and manner in which activities are carried out. It is an integral component of safeguarding which forms part of the contractual terms and conditions of all YIDA'S employees and representatives contracted to work with the organization. Special considerations are made to safeguard children and youth and to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of any individual.

By signing the Code of Conduct, each employee or third party commits to:

- ❖ Work actively to promote the best interests of children and adults
- ❖ Act in line with YIDA's Child Safeguarding Policy and relevant guides
- ❖ Encourage children and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behavior they do not like and make a complaint where necessary
- ❖ Recognize that caution is required in one-to-one situations, particularly in sensitive situations such as dealing with program participants including children who may be upset or traumatized.

3.3 Awareness and Training

YIDA recognises that raising awareness and providing appropriate training are crucial for improving child safeguarding practices. It is essential that all employees and those engaged in YIDA programmes are aware of the child safeguarding standards and their obligations to implement them. Depending on the role of each employee, different levels of training are provided. However, at a minimum, all are introduced to the safeguarding policy during



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induction and ongoing refresher workshops and/or training about conduct. YIDA also commits to communicating the safeguarding message to program participants through our agreements with all partner organizations.

The following initiatives are either in place or being developed to ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the Safeguarding Policy:

- ❖ All employees and representatives receive information on the relevance and impact of the Child Safeguarding Policy and accompanying guidance documents on their work;
- ❖ Safeguarding manager and those involved in responding to accusations or incidents of child abuse will receive specialized training on their roles and responsibilities;
- ❖ Additional guidance on programs where there are increased risks, such as humanitarian crises, is provided in the Humanitarian Protection Policy and Handbook;
- ❖ Communication materials about the Child Safeguarding Policy such as posters, will contain the following information: the child safeguarding message, a summary of the code of conduct or behavior to be expected from YIDA staff or representatives and how to make a complaint about exploitation and abuse.
- ❖ Guides and promotional material will be available in the languages which can be clearly understood by all individuals in contact with YIDA.
- ❖ All relevant documentation for the Child Safeguarding Policy, accompanying guides and forms will be accessible on YIDA's website, Facebook page and social networks.

3.4 Risk Assessment and Safe Programming

Child safeguarding considerations such as exploitation and abuse should be included in all risk assessments and program cycle management stages to ensure that all activities are conducted in a safe and dignified manner.

3.5 Special Considerations for Recording Stories and Images

All program visits where it is intended to collect stories or record images (photographic/film or other) of program participants should be arranged in advance through partner organisations. The partner organisations must accompany any such visit and an interpreter should be provided if necessary. The purpose and reason for the visit should be fully explained to the program participants and agreed with them in advance. Consent should be sought from the program participants for the use of their story and images; where appropriate, this consent should be written. In particular, before children are photographed or interviewed, the written permission of the parent/guardian must be attained. Following the visit, a copy of the article / story and photographs should be sent to the program participants through the partner organisations or on a follow-up visit.

The following guidelines should be adhered to before taking pictures or engaging the children:

- ❖ Ask the child's parent's/guardian's permission to take the photograph/image



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- ❖ Individuals must be appropriately dressed according to their choice and country of origin
- ❖ Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images should be reported and recorded.
- ❖ In communities where children wear few items of clothing be particularly careful about the images chosen
- ❖ The recorded images should focus on an activity and, where possible, feature groups of children rather than individuals.
- ❖ Make sure that photographers and filmmakers are not allowed to spend time with or have access to children without supervision.

When publishing images:

- ❖ Try to use images that represent a broad range of people, gender, age groups, abilities and ethnic groups.
- ❖ Only use first names of a child; be careful not to reveal too much detail about where children live, their school or their hobbies.
- ❖ Wherever possible, get adult / parent / guardian's consent, preferably written, to use images and inform them of the purpose, where and how the images will be used.
- ❖ Seek advice about publishing images on a website and always ensure time is allowed to edit images before they are uploaded.

3.7 Contractual Agreements

YIDA employees and Consultants:

All people who are contracted to work with or for YIDA are required to understand and sign a policy declaration for this policy and YIDA's Code of Conduct, which forms part of the terms and conditions of the contract. Failure to comply with this policy by a YIDA's employee may lead to corrective action being taken under YIDA's Disciplinary Procedures. Failure to comply with this policy by a YIDA's representative may lead to termination of a contract.

4 REPORTING, RESPONDING AND MONITORING

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals involved in YIDA'S work have a shared responsibility to recognise, report and respond to exploitation and abuse. How responsibility is incorporated into roles can vary depending on number of staff involved.

Responsibility for All employees & representatives

- ❖ To ensure that the Policy on Child Safeguarding and Protection Program is implemented and that safeguarding best practice in terms of prevention and response is incorporated into their work.
- ❖ All Managers ,to ensure that staff are supported and systems and procedures exist to implement and monitor safeguarding standards. Human Resources and any staff involved in recruitment,to ensure that the recruitment of all YIDA employees and



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representatives is in line with the current Recruitment Procedures and that all new recruits understand and sign up to the Policy as part of induction. Child Safeguarding Manager to promote awareness and good practice at all levels in preventing exploitation and abuse of children perpetrated by YIDA employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or other representatives in the course of their work and to be first point of contact in relation to safeguarding issues.

NB: The responsibility to prevent and respond to exploitation and abuse is shared. It is incorrect to perceive that the person named as Safeguarding manager is the only person with responsibility to implement standards and safeguard children. Chief Executive officer (CEO) Ensure that the office has systems and procedures in place which are in line with the Policy to prevent and respond to issues or complaints as they arise.

4.2 Recognising Exploitation & Abuse

It is crucial that all involved in implementing YIDA's programs recognise that exploitation and abuse of children in any form whether physical, sexual, emotional or neglect is unacceptable and will be acted upon once we are aware of it. All employees and representatives are expected to listen to and consider whatever information program participants or partners may share with us.

4.3 Duty to Report

All YIDA employees and representatives have a mandatory duty to report any suspected incident of exploitation or abuse of a child to the Safeguarding Manager (SGM) or the program coordinator. Failure to report such matters may result in disciplinary action. It should be noted that abuse may be current or recent. There are no time constraints for reporting and taking action within the remit of this procedure, although YIDA encourages that reports be made as soon as knowledge, or suspicion, of an act of exploitation or abuse occurs

YIDA is committed to ensuring that adherence to confidentiality, in the management of complaints and allegations of exploitation and abuse, is strictly maintained. All reports received by the CSM/Program coordinator need to be logged and documented in a safe and confidential manner. The person who first receives the information and/or complaint must complete the incident report and submit as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Manager or program coordinator. The accurate and detailed recording of such information is important in facilitating any assessment or further investigation into the incident.

This includes, but is not limited to: dates, times, names, locations, context, any noticeable warning signs. Such information must be reported to the Child Safeguarding Focal Person and/or program coordinator as soon as possible. It should be noted that failure on the part of YIDA staff member to report an incident or a concern could result in sanctions, including dismissal, being applied. Third parties such as visitors or consultants are equally obliged to report anything of concern that comes to their knowledge. YIDA will endeavor to protect all individuals in reporting, provided the allegations are made reasonably and in good faith.

4.4 Responding to Reports or Allegations



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YIDA will take whatever action is appropriate, necessary and possible, without risk of further harm to any individual and to ensure the safety of those involved. Each case will be considered individually

4.5 Guidance for field staff who receive a Complaint

All YIDA'S employees, representatives and official visitors have a duty to report any suspected incident of exploitation or abuse of an individual(s) immediately. Reports may relate to, but not be limited to: physical abuse, emotional abuse, exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse or neglect.

It is not, however, the role of an individual staff member to investigate beyond the need to ensure that any report of an incident is accurate and is sufficiently detailed to be the basis for a decision regarding next steps to be taken.

Actions to be taken when a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse is received:

- ❖ Respond immediately to any concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse
- ❖ Refer all information to the Safe Guarding Manager (SGM) as soon as possible, the SGM will assess the information and will follow up the matter with the Program Coordinator (PC) .
- ❖ Wherever possible take notes, if not immediately as soon as possible, but not later than the end of that day
- ❖ Record all information on the YIDA's case registration form. This should be signed and dated by the assessor. Include all of the details, even those which may not appear important at the time
- ❖ The SGM will compile a child protection case file and will store all original copies of information in a safe and secure location
- ❖ Assess the risk to the child/children in question and if you deem it to be urgent, check that the SGM has addressed the matter with the urgency you believe it deserves.

YIDA reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations or refuse to engage an individual, if appropriate criminal record checks are not undertaken, or cannot be undertaken for roles that are identified as working with or having contact with children.

Poor Safeguarding Practice takes place whenever staff or any other person fail to provide the standard of care and support expected and directed by policies, procedures and training delivered by YIDA. Poor safeguarding practice can occur through non-compliance with policies and procedures and when staff and third parties to whom this Policy applies ignore the rights and welfare of beneficiaries. Continued poor safeguarding practice may cause harm and can become abuse.

YIDA takes poor safeguarding practice seriously and deems it unacceptable. Poor safeguarding practice must be reported. All reported cases of poor safeguarding practice will be dealt with in line with YIDA safeguarding policies and/or disciplinary processes.



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Examples of poor safeguarding practice include:

- ❖ When insufficient care is taken to prevent harm.
- ❖ Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported.
- ❖ Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults, including through the use of technology/social media;
- ❖ Ignoring health and safety guidelines;

Relevant Laws & Endorsements

This policy will be implemented in accordance with: All relevant Uganda laws protecting children from abuse, violence and harm and those outlining measures for reporting known or alleged cases of abuse; Applicable laws within the countries where YIDA operates; and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), The UN Secretary General’s Bulletin: Special measures for protection from sexual abuse.

DECLARATION

I have read and fully understood YIDA’s Child Safeguarding Policy -

I agree and accept to apply the above Child Safeguarding Policy in its entirety.

Signed:

Name:

Title:.....

Date:.....

For HR Only

Received by: _____

Received on: _____