

## **INTRODUCTION:**

UGANDA SOCIETY FOR DISABLED CHILDREN IS A LOCAL NGO, which is limited by guarantee. It advocates for the rights of children with disabilities as well as their families. One of its objectives is to improve the lives of children and young people with disabilities. THE OTHER IS TO ENSURE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES FROM ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF ALL FORMS.

THE RIGHTS OF A CHILD ARE ENSHRINED UNDER ARTICLE THREE OF THE UN Convention on the rights of a child and the basic principle is protection against harm this is derived from the analogical term “in the interest of the child.”

USDC recognizes that child abuse may occur in all places regardless of culture, race, sex or disability.

In a bid to protect the child with disability, USDC uses available human rights instruments and the relevant legislations such as the UN convention on the rights of a child, the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, the constitution of the republic of Uganda 1995, the children’s act cap 59 to advocate for child protection in recognition of the special needs of children with disabilities, USDC sets this policy to specifically address the rights of children with disability as they are enshrined in CRPD

USDC child protection policy and the code of conduct:

Expectations in dealing with issues of child protection and provision of guidance of staff and third parties.

The starting point for an open approach to promoting the well being of children with disabilities with our societies based on the concept from the child rights convention 1989, taking the best interest of the child as the basis for all behavior.

Is part of the employment contract and its contravention is a cause for dismissal.

Forms part of the partnership agreement and adherence is a pre requisite for net working collaboration.

## **DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGIES:**

---a child according to the constitution of the republic of Uganda 1995 is one who is below the age of 18 years.

---a child with disability according to the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities is one who because of physical, mental sensory or intellectual disability cannot effectively interact with others on an equal basis.

---staff means and include employees of the organization.

Partner includes the parent support groups, and related NGOS with whom we work with.

---child abuse: the universal categories of child abuse (see the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, Ugandan constitution and children’s Act CAP 59

---Sexual abuse: actual or threatened sexual exploitation of a child including all forms of sexual activity such as rape, defilement, pornography and incest.

**Physical injury:**

Actual or physical harm to any child or a failure to prevent physical harm or suffering.

**Neglect:**

The failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including cold, starvation, locking up, failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in impairment of the child's health, growth and development.

**Emotional abuse:**

Persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves emotional ill treatment.

**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.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Uganda society for disabled children considers child abuse un acceptable that hinders chances for children with disabilities to achieve their full potentials for their growth and development. USDC is committed to ensure that in all its activities and those of its partners, all necessary steps are taken to protect the rights of the child with disabilities and to ensure their well being.

The code of conduct and the underlying principals are to be respected by all USDC staff, partners, donors and those visiting projects for whatever reasons including volunteers, consultants, journalists and parent representatives.

The child protection policy takes into account local concepts of normal adult-child interaction, culture, religion, and local laws except in case where these are deemed to be contrary to the best interest of the child.

**POLICY AIMS**

- To raise awareness to all staff, partners and other people who come into contact with Children with disabilities.
- To denounce and react to rampant violation of children's rights and abuses
- To lay out recruitment procedures, training staff on child protection matters and by developing an open and informed culture within Uganda Society for Disabled children

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD PROTECTION:**

All staff, partners, volunteers and parent representatives must follow these rules to prevent, stop and report any and all abuse to children with disabilities in Uganda.

### **Dos:**

1. Know the code of conduct.
2. Treat children with disabilities with respect and dignity regardless of race, colour, sex, religion and nationality.
3. Be aware of children's vulnerability: generally children with disabilities are vulnerable and susceptible to child abuse, thus requiring special protection.
4. Be aware of situation that may present risks (being alone with children during therapy session, taking film/photos or interview for work purpose/reporting).
5. Plan and organize the work , work place or visit to manage risks
6. As far as possible , be visible in working with children or visiting children
7. Participate in achieving a culture of openness to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
8. Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go un challenged
9. Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
10. Empower children – discuss with them their rights
11. Report concerns or incidences of child abuse to designated Person and authority

### **DON'TS**

1. DO not develop physical or sexual relationship with children
2. Do not act in ways that may be abusive to children
3. Do not spend time with children alone away from others
4. Do not condone or participate in behavior of children that are illegal
5. Do not behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate e.g. fondling , kiss, or touch children in culturally insensitive
6. DO not administer corporal punishment
7. Do not act in ways intended to shame , humiliate, belittle or degrade children
8. Do not discriminate against children
9. Do not employ children to do domestic work as maids, house boys and casual laborer
10. Do not allow a child to be systemically neglected

## **CHILDREN AND MEDIA**

Uganda Society for Disabled Children recognizes the media and technology as a necessary component in raising awareness and reporting, these include; photography, video coverage/film, internet. Uganda Society for Disabled Children shall undertake:

1. seek consent of a child or her parents before taking any coverage or photograph
2. Not to promise returns for coverage of images
3. Take images of children that are dignified and respectful

4. Ensure that images of children could not be interpreted as sexual or condone any other situation of abuse.
5. protect the safety and privacy of children and their families by not using identifiable images
6. The images and messages may only be used with consent of USDC
7. Journalists , reporters, photographers, film makers and other media/marketing professionals must also – besides this code of conduct

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

USDC aims to make safe environment for children with disabilities by raising awareness about child abuse and recognizing the signs of child abuse. This Child protection policy aims at: 1- Child abuse awareness 2 – prevention of Child abuse and Monitoring and review of the policy.

### **1. Awareness Raising and prevention of child abuse**

In this area USDC shall ensure the following

- All staff and partners know the child protection policy
- All staff and partners and other parent representatives are made aware of the problem of child abuse of all forms
- Open discussion about child protection concerns are stimulated
- Focal point persons are appointed among the structure of USDC
- Recruitment and selection procedures for staff, volunteer or any other persons that will be subjected to back tracking of their criminal records.

### **2. Reporting, protection and response**

In order to track and take relevant steps that concerns child abuse USDC and her partners shall create suitable channels for reporting child abuse and ensuring child safety

The following reporting levels have been put in place to report all forms of abuse:

#### **a) Parent support group**

When abuse occur in one of the areas in the operation of a parent Support group, the parents' representatives must report such a case to the designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) in the field who is the staff of the Organization.

#### **b) USDC staff in the field**

When child abuse occurs in one of the area USDC staff should report the case to the manger in charge of child protection

## **REPORTING PRINCIPLES: PROTECTION AND RESPONSE**

- Take any concern serious
- Take steps to ensure the protection of the child who is the subject of concern

- Support children , staff or others who raises the concern
- Act appropriately and effectively- staff should not start investigation when the allegation is raised this is the job of managers

### **PRINCIPLES.**

1. The dignity and rights of a child are to be respected in every circumstance.
2. In interviewing and reporting of children, special attention is to be paid to every child's right to privacy and confidentiality.
3. Protections will b done in the best interest of a child.
4. While trying to determine the best interest of a child, the child's rights to have their views taken into account are to be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
5. Those closest to the children situation and best able assess it are to be consulted about the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reporting.
6. 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.

### **GUIDE LINES FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN.**

1. Do not harm to any child, avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation or that reactivate a Childs' pain and grief from traumatic events.
2. Do not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of sex, age, religion, status, educational back ground or physical abilities.
3. Ensure that the child or guardian knows that the reporters are talking to them and explaining the
4. Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and when possible for documentary photographs when possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing.

### **GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON CHILDREN.**

1. Do not further stigmatize any child; avoid categorizations or description that expose a child to negative reprisals
2. Always provide an accurate context for the child's story
3. Avoid further using negative descriptions like lame, limping, crippled etc
4. Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of the child

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY.**

In ensuring proper implementation of the activities in the child protection, Uganda Society For disabled Children has instituted a mechanism of capturing and tracking the outcome of such a policy. The following areas will be monitored;

1. Awareness raising to staff and partners who are in direct contact with children with disability
2. Conduct of staff in relation to dealing with children.

3. understanding and signing the code of conduct by staff , volunteers, visitors and other ;partners
4. Establish relevant forms for capturing challenges, good practice and other suggestions.
5. Include the policy agenda in the normal USDC frame work to review the progress of this policy.