

Child Protection Functional Area:	Child Protection Policy Unit
Organisation	Innovative Youth with Action Uganda (IYAU)
Approved by:	Executive Committee
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Applicable to:	All IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors
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Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The Executive Committee of Innovative Youth with Action Uganda is committed to ensuring the fulfilment of children's rights including their rights to protection. IYAU is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring children's right to protection under Article 19 of the UNCRC and the children Act of Uganda Cap 59 are fully realised. We take seriously our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form. In addition, we will take positive action to prevent those who abuse children from becoming involved with IYAU and take stringent measures against any IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors who abuse a child. Our decisions and actions in response to Child protection concerns and breaches of this policy will be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of the child'.

A. Definitions under the Child Protection Policy

1. In line with the UNCRC and the children Act of Uganda, for the purposes of this policy, a **Child** is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1 and Children Act of Uganda Cap 59).
2. **Child abuse** is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes

do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their well-being, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

3. **Child protection** is defined in this policy as the responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities that IYAU undertakes to protect children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors and/or their participation in any IYAU activity, including our projects and programs.

In addition, it incorporates our responsibility to ensure that where there are concerns over a Child's welfare or where a Child has been subject to Child abuse, actions are taken to address this; concerns are reported and responded to appropriately and in line with the relevant global, national and local procedures; and incidents are analysed so as to ensure continued learning and growth in the field of organisational child protection.

4. **Child rights**– Mean the basic needs that a child must have to ensure his or her proper growth and development. Children have the “right to life, education, proper health, survival and development” where development encompasses physical, mental, emotional, social and moral development.

5. **IYAU Staff** refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of IYAU projects and programs.

6. **IYAU Associates** refers to a range of paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support IYAU. It includes, among others, Annual general Assembly, members of Executive Committee or board, volunteers, including community volunteers,; interns; sponsors; researchers; donors, consultants and contractors; staff and/or representatives of partner organisations and local governments (when operating in partnership agreement with IYAU).

7. **IYAU Visitors** refers to a range of persons who are visiting our programs and may come into contact with children through IYAU, including journalists, media, researchers, and celebrities.

B. Scope of the Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy applies to all IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of the policy.

C. Principles

This policy is informed by a set of principles that are derived from the UNCRC and the Children's Act of Uganda and include:

1. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
2. Each child has a fundamental right to life, survival and development. IYAU's child-centred community development approach provides a basis for ensuring the realisation of children's rights to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation.

3. All children should be encouraged to fulfil their potential, and inequality and discrimination should be challenged.
4. Children will be assured the right to express their views freely and this will be given 'due weight' in accordance with their age and level of maturity. We will not discriminate against the child. The child will be treated with respect irrespective of gender, nationality or ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual preference and gender identity, family, socio-economic and cultural background, or any history of conflict with the law.
5. Each child has a fundamental right to be educated and guided, immunized, given proper food, clothing, medical care and a home.
6. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
7. IYAU has particular responsibilities to children who come into contact with us. No child must come to harm as a result of their engagement with IYAU as a sponsored child, a participant in IYAU program or as part of any IYAU fundraising or advocacy campaign.
8. These particular responsibilities extend to those individuals or organisations who are associated with IYAU. Therefore, everyone working for or associated with IYAU's work must be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy

D. IYAU's vision for Child Protection

IYAU creates safe environments for children in all aspects of its work whether fundraising or program implementation, where children are respected, protected and empowered as their capacities evolve to contribute actively to the development of Child protection measures within IYAU. This policy aims to ensure that IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors , as appropriate to their engagement with IYAU, are skilled, confident, understand, accept and are well supported in meeting their Child protection responsibilities and engage positively with children and communities in ways that enhance the achievement of IYAU's overall program goals and commitments.

E. Responsibilities for those covered by the scope of the Child Protection Policy

Everyone who works with and engages with IYAU has a responsibility to ensure that children are protected. The responsibilities detailed below are mandatory for those who fall within the scope of the policy.

IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors must:

1. Never abuse and/or exploit a Child or act/ behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.
2. Report any Child abuse and Child protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable IYAU's procedures and this policy.
3. Desist from engaging in any form of sexual activity or action, including paying for sexual services or acts, or develop relationships with children that may in any way be deemed or construed as exploitative or abusive

4. Respond to a Child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
5. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child abuse.
6. Contribute to building an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
7. Always treat children in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity and dignity, considers their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk of, harm. For example: when taking images/pictures during visits, interacting with children or generating stories of children, ensure that this is done in a manner consistent with the appropriate IYAU policies and procedures.
8. Never ask for or accept personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address, webcam, skype etc) from any Child or family associated or formerly associated with IYAU's work or share their own personal contact details with such individuals. [For IYAU Staff and partner organisations, the exception is where this has been explicitly authorised for business purposes in a manner which is in line with local IYAU policies and procedures, has the consent of the Child's parents or guardian and is supervised by the relevant line or supervising manager].
9. Never make any contact with a Child or family members associated with IYAU's work that is not supervised by a (or another) member of IYAU Staff. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails and letters.

IYAU Staff must:

10. Agree and uphold this Child Protection Policy at all times and Comply with the behaviours detailed in IYAU's Code of Conduct.
11. All IYAU Directors, Programs Managers and Coordinators must ensure that each IYAU entity has in place local procedures that are consistent with this Child Protection Policy and with the document Reporting and Responding to Child Protection Issues in IYAU to respond to incidents of Child abuse. Local procedures should be developed with the assistance of local advisers in accordance with local law. It should also be ensured that this policy and local procedures are made available in local languages and child-friendly formats
12. All IYAU staff must ensure that reported Child protection concerns or are accused of Child abuse are given appropriate care, support and protection in dealing with all aspects of the case including any safety concerns and potential reprisals which may arise from the incident or from the reporting of such concerns.
13. Treat all children equally and with dignity and respect, regardless of differences of race, colour, gender, religion, political or other opinion; national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or any other status
14. Desist from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate for their age or developmental stage, or which might place them at risk of injury or ill health
15. Act in ways that do not constitute abuse or place a child at risk of abuse; nor participate in or condone behaviour involving children which is abusive, unsafe or illegal

F. Personal Conduct outside Work or Association with IYAU

IYAU does not dictate the belief and value systems by which IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors conduct their personal lives. However, actions taken by them out of working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be considered a violation of this policy.

IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates and IYAU Visitors 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.

G. Implementation, Monitoring and Sanctions

The Executive Committee of IYAU are ultimately accountable for this policy. The Executive Director, Programs Manager and Program Coordinators are responsible for its implementation.

The monitoring of adherence to this policy is made through the mandatory tracking of the Child Protection Policy Implementation Standards and IYAU's Code of Conduct by all parts of IYAU.

Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with these responsibilities may incur the following sanctions:

- For IYAU Staff - disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal.
- For IYAU Associates or IYAU Visitors - up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with IYAU.
- Where relevant - appropriate legal or other such actions.

Where concerns exist about the conduct of IYAU Staff, IYAU Associates, and IYAU Visitors in relation to Child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country or by IYAU in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary action for IYAU Staff and IYAU Managers.

Be aware that if a legitimate concern about suspected Child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations of Child abuse.