



CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFEGUARDING POLICY



APPLICATION

As a policy, it applies to:

- Outbox including its headquarters located in Kampala, Uganda and any of its other offices or subsidiaries
- All other organisations that have signed any agreement with Outbox and

Together "Outbox Uganda Limited entities" or may be referred to as "we" or "us" in this document.

Young people

We work with young people and therefore the scope of this policy extends to young people we are supporting or are in contact with, through our youth engagement work. We recognise that young people have particular safeguarding needs requiring distinct consideration.

Children

We define children as those people who are under the age of eighteen (18) years of age as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

PURPOSE

Outbox recognises that violence against children and young people is prevalent throughout the world and in all societies. Violence against children includes physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and sexual abuse. Furthermore, children and young people may be vulnerable and at risk due to, for example, reasons of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability, and age or illness.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- All who work for and engage with us are skilled, confident, understand and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from violence and engage positively with them in ways that enhance the achievement of our purpose;
- We have in place procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behaviour of our staff, associates, visitors or us as an organisation that result in violence against a child or young person and/or places them at risk of the same and;
- Children and young people we work with are aware of our responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviours of our staff, associates and visitors and the routes for reporting such incidents



TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

When used in this document:

"Associate" refers to a range of contracted paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support Outbox. It includes among others board members, volunteers, interns, sponsors, donors, consultants and contractors, staff/representative of partner organisations and local governments (when operating in partnership with Outbox)

Child in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this policy, is defined as any person - girl, boy, young woman, young man, and children of other gender identities - under the age of 18 years of age (UNCRC Article 1)

Direct beneficiaries are the people who are the target of and who we know will be immediately affected by one or more project outputs; irrespective of whether these are delivered directly by Outbox or by partners or organisations who are acting on behalf of Outbox.

Direct beneficiaries are individuals who receive materials, equipment, interventions such as training, mentorship, grant or seed funding, or other personal support;

Direct beneficiaries may be a single member of a household (for example a mother participating in training on business planning) or it may be all members in the household

Harm is any detrimental effect on a child's or young person's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. Harm may be caused by abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended;

Staff refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any Outbox entity

"Violence" against a child or young person includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, or abuse, neglect or negligent, emotion ill-treatment or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other exploitation of a child or young person. Acts of violence can also take place online through, for example the web, social media or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent violence against a child or young person. Violence consists of anything which individuals, groups, institutions or organisations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or young person's wellbeing, dignity and survival and development.

"Visitor" refers to a range of persons who are visiting our offices or programmes and may come into contact with children and young people through an Outbox entity, including journalists, media, researchers, visiting sponsors and celebrities.



"Young person/people" or "youth" in line with United Nations definitions, include individuals - young women, young men and young persons of other gender identities - aged 15 to 24 years old. This group spans the categories of children, adolescents and adults but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.



SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

Outbox is committed to creating a safe environment for children and young people. All staff have a duty to uphold the principles of safeguarding children and young people and commit to maintaining an environment that prevents violence against children and young people. Further to this, sexual exploitation and abuse by staff constitutes acts of gross misconduct and is therefore grounds for termination of employment.

As such, all staff and partners agree that they will:

- A. Adhere to the policy on safeguarding children and young people and be open and honest in my dealings with children and young people, their families and communities participating in programmes, projects, processes, events and activities
- B. Treat children and young people in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity, and dignity and considers their best interest regardless of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class or any history of conflict with the law
- C. Comply with all relevant international standards and local legislation in relation to child labour, and refrain from using children and young people aged below 18 years for domestic or other labour, if such work is inappropriate, exploitative or harmful given their age or development capacity, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury, exploitation or violence. In addition, I understand that I must not use children and young people of any age that we work with for domestic or other labour.
- D. Contribute to building an environment where children and young people we engage with are:
 - a. Respected and empowered to participate in and discuss decision making and interventions into their safeguarding in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities and
 - b. Well informed on their safeguarding and protection rights and what to do if they have a concern
- E. Create and maintain an environment which prevents the abuse and exploitation of children and young people ensuring that I am aware of potential risks with regards to my conduct and work, and take appropriate action so as to minimise risks to children and young people
- F. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people associated with Outbox. This means I will:
 - a. Never ask for personal contact details or invitations to share personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media accounts, address, skype etc) from any child or family associated or formerly associated with our work or share my own



personal contact details with such individuals except where this has been explicitly authorised by Outbox and/or for Outbox business purposes

- b. Never disclose or support the disclosure of information that identifies supported families or children, through any medium, unless that disclosure is in accordance with Outbox policies and procedures or has the explicit consent of Outbox. Media include paper, photographs and social media
- c. Never make any contact with a child, young person or family member associated with Outbox's work that is not supervised by a (or another) member of Outbox staff. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails, and letters.
- d. Always ensure that when on an official or work visit with Outbox and I wish to take pictures of children or young people associated with the organisation, for personal use, I will:
 - i. Always consult first with the local Outbox representative so as to make sure that it is ok to take pictures in the local context and that the intended use of the pictures does not conflict with Outbox's policies;
 - ii. Ask permission of the child or young person (or in the case of young children, their parent or guardian) informing them of the specific purpose(s) and intended use (including how and where) and respect their decision to say no making it clear that there will be absolutely no negative repercussions from denying such consent
 - iii. Ensure that images are respectful and do not impact negatively on their dignity and privacy
 - iv. Ensure that the use of images does not put the child or young person at risk of being identified or located
 - v. Never upload the images of children and young people associated with Outbox to non-Outbox social media pages with the full and explicit consent of Outbox
- G. Report and respond to any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential abuse to a child or young person in accordance with the applicable procedures
- H. Cooperate fully and confidentially with any Outbox investigation of concerns or allegations of abuse to children and young people
- I. Immediately disclose all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offence which occurred before or occurs during association with Outbox that relate to exploitation and abuse of a child or young person



I will not:

- A. Abuse or exploit a child or young person or behave in any way that places a child or young person at risk of harm, including through harmful traditional practices such as, for example, Female genital mutilation, forced or child marriage
- B. Engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
- C. Engage in sexual relationships with Outbox youth direct beneficiaries aged 18 to 24 years as these undermine the credibility and integrity of Outbox's work and are based on inherently unequal power dynamics
- D. Use physical punishment/discipline or use of physical force of any kind towards children and young people
- E. Engage young people in any form of sexual activity which involves the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries
- F. Use language or behave towards a child or young person in a way that is inappropriate, offensive, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- G. Fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children or young people in an appropriate or culturally insensitive way
- H. Have a child/children/young person with whom I am in contact in a work-related context, stay overnight at home or any other personal residential location or accommodation.
- I. Sleep in the same room or bed as a child or young person with whom I am in contact in a work-related context. Where it is necessary to sleep close to unaccompanied children and young people, I will make sure that another adult is present and it is in line with authorised procedures.
- J. Do things of a personal nature for children or young person, with whom I am in contact in a work-related context (e.g taking a child/young person to the toilet/bathroom; helping them get un/dressed etc) that they can do for themselves
- K. Spent time alone away from others with children and young people with whom I am in contact in a work-related context; I will always make sure that another adult is with me and/or I am with the child/young person in an open public place, where others are around and in plain view of others
- L. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or young people
- M. Act in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children and young people or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- N. Discriminate against, show differential or preferential to, or favour particular children and young people to the detriment of them or others



- O. Develop relationships with, engage in any practice with or develop behaviour towards children and young people which could in any way be deemed or interpreted as exploitative or abusive
- P. Condone or participate in behaviour of children or young people which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Q. Use any computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras, or any such medium to exploit, harass or bully children or young people
- R. Use computers, mobile phones or video/digital cameras or other electronic devices, to access, view, create, download or distribute pornography, especially abusive images of children or young people

The above is not an exhaustive list. Staff, associates and visitors should consider all related actions and behaviour which may compromise the rights and safeguarding of children and young people.

Personal conduct outside work or engagement with us

We do not dictate the belief and value systems by which staff, associates and 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 the policy.

I, _____ (name) have read and understand the Outbox Safeguarding Code of Conduct, and hereby agree to abide by the regulations and standards described in this document. I understand that if I fail to comply with the Safeguarding Code of Conduct I will be subject to the applicable disciplinary measures.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Signature: _____



GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING SAFEGUARDING IN PRACTICE

These guidelines outline the requirements for safeguarding children and young people that are applicable to organisations working with Outbox in carrying out our programmes involving children and young people.

They are particularly applicable to organisations assessed as having contact with children and young people, and/or whose projects, programmes, processes, activities, advocacy and influence work impact on children and young people. Organisations funded by Outbox are expected to build on these guidelines as appropriate based on the nature of their activities and risks to children and young people.

The guidelines illustrate our commitment to support and respect children's and young people's rights to be protected from harm and to provide a safe and protective environment for children and young people who are involved with any programmes funded by Outbox.

The guidelines should be applied in relation to children and/or young people as appropriate, depending on the group the organisation works with.

1. **Prevention:** The organisation must take appropriate measures to manage child and/or youth safeguarding risk factors and prevent abuse and exploitation before it occurs. Prevention measures should include organisational safeguarding policies, codes of conduct and associated procedures; the management of safeguarding risks in relation to its operations, activities and interventions; and the production and promotion of child and young person friendly safeguarding information and resources
2. **Code of conduct:** Each organisation is required to ensure that their personnel avoid any behaviour or conduct that compromises the safety and protection of children and/or young people within its activities, operations and programmes. In addition, programmes and activities working directly with children and/or young people towards each other. This should be incorporated into policy and practice documents
3. **Gender equality and non-discrimination:** The organisation should ensure that all safeguarding children and/or young people policies and procedures take into account gender equality and non-discrimination requirements. Recognising that girls, boys, young women, young men and children and young people of different gender identities may face different risks relating to their safety and protection and that all children and/or young people have an equal right to protection, irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background or class.

4. **Screening procedures:** There should be detailed screening procedures for all personnel including unpaid volunteers who will come into contact with children and/or young people (directly or indirectly). Screening procedures should be as available in each country and updated on a regular basis, where possible. Screening procedures may include: certificate of good conduct, police reference checks or equivalent, verification that applicants are not listed in national registries of child offenders; a detailed application and interview process; references who support the applicant's suitability to work with children and/or young people
5. **Awareness:** The organisation should ensure that all personnel, sub-contractors or consultants or affiliates involved with children and young people's programmes are aware of safeguarding risks, policies and procedures; and their safeguarding responsibilities. In addition, children and/or young people engaged and their parents, guardians or carers should be informed of the same so that they know what behaviours to expect and how to report any concerns
6. **Capacity building:** The organisation should develop the capacity of all who work with and for children and/or young people to appropriately prevent, detect, report and respond to safeguarding concerns and particularly as they pertain to gender and other identities. Efforts should be made to ensure organisational policies and practices are understood and can be effectively implemented through mandatory inductions and on-going training courses for all employees and other associates
7. **Participation of children and/or young people:** Children and/or young people should be actively, meaningfully and ethically involved in the development of safeguarding measures in accordance with evolving capacities. Children and/or young people must not be treated simply as objects of concern but rather listened to and taken seriously and treated as individual people with their own views and opinions.
8. **Reporting mechanisms for children and/or young people and staff:** Mechanisms should be established that enable the safe reporting of safeguarding concerns. Such mechanisms should ensure appropriate escalation of concerns within the organisation, referral to the appropriate authorities and confidentiality. In addition, child and youth reporting mechanisms should be accessible, friendly and sensitive to their differing needs.
9. **Response and follow-up:** Organisational policies and procedures should include appropriate measures to support children or young people when concerns arise. All measures taken to respond to a safeguarding concern should take into account the best interest of the child or young person and be sensitive to their differing gender and other identities ensuring they are kept safe and protected. Concerns should be written up and information kept in accordance with the privacy and confidentiality policies of the organisation and/or Uganda's legislation. In addition, organisational processes should ensure response evaluation and follow up for organisational learning.
10. **Implementation, monitoring and review:** The implementation and monitoring the safeguarding children and young people policy of each organisation should be reviewed at



regular intervals as determined necessary by the organisation, preferably every three years, where possible

11. **Sanction and discipline of organisational personnel:** The organisation policies and procedures should provide for appropriate sanctions and disciplinary measures which ensures children and young people are protected from further potential harm. This may include immediate suspension of personnel until such time as the allegations are followed up and either substantiated or refuted and/or where personnel is convicted of abusing a child or young person, the said personnel is immediately terminated with cause from his or her position
12. **Informed consent:** The organisation should provide children and/or young people (and their parents/legal guardians where applicable) with all necessary details (include any associated risk) to make informed decision regarding their participation in programmes and activities, including any voice recordings, video or photographs of children and/or young people (including how and where these will be used). Participation and/or usage of information and/or images should only take place after consent is obtained.
13. **Protection of personal information:** Personal information regarding any child or children and/or young people, whether or not such information is obtained as part of the programme involving children and/or young people should be treated confidentially. There should be clear procedures showing the responsibilities within the organisation for accessing and using such data with appropriate authorisations. In addition, such data should not be disclosed to any third party, except in accordance with the policies of the organisation or as required by applicable local laws. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, any information that can be linked to or used to identify a child and/or young person.
14. **Working with partners:** The organisation should ensure adequate safeguarding assessments are made as part of its due diligence processes when it comes to partnership working. Third party entities that are contracted or supported to work with children must be subject to the same safeguarding principles and approach outlined in the organisation's policy and procedures. Vendors, suppliers and other contractors that may be in direct or indirect contact with children must also be subject to appropriate safeguarding measures.

REPORTING CASES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

To ensure the confidentiality, transparency and safety of those that would want to raise any issues of sexual exploitation and abuse, we encourage you to reach out for support through a referral platform supported by our partner Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development known as Safepal. Please download the safepal mobile app on Google playstore or dial USSD code *260*6# to report.



For any inquiries about safeguarding, please reach out to our safeguarding team on complaints@outbox.co.ug

Address: 4th Floor, Soliz House, Lumumba Avenue, Kampala, Uganda

CLEAR MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESIGNATED STAFF

We ensure that managers and designated focal point staff are aware of their responsibilities for creating a safe environment for children and young people, implementing the policy and ensuring child protection measures are operating effectively.

The board of directors for Outbox is ultimately responsible for the children and youth safeguarding policy. The prime responsibility of implementation of this policy lies with the line manager for a business unit. Managers have a very clear responsibility to ensure that child protection measures are in place.