



## **DIVERSITY ACTION NETWORK (DAN)**

### **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY.**

## 1. Background

Child abuse is a global phenomenon occurring in all countries and in all societies. It involves the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and adolescents. It is always preventable if proper measures are taken.

At DAN we recognize that children and adolescents can be potentially subjected to exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect in families, communities, institutions, organizations, private places, public places by various circumstances. In order to address and protect children and adolescents from potential abuse and exploitation during their involvement with DAN's services, this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy has been developed. The policy describes how DAN is committed to preventing, and responding appropriately to, harm to children. This policy sets out common values, principles and beliefs and describes how DAN and its staff's commitment to protect children will be carried out.

## 2. Introduction

This Child Protection Policy deals with the protection of children and adolescents as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the UN Child Rights Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless majority is attained earlier.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board, paid staff, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of DAN. To reduce the risks, DAN makes it clear through the organization's codes of conduct (in annex1), recruitment procedures, training and internal communications that child abuse by staff, volunteers and associates will not be tolerated.

DAN is dedicated to applying humanitarian principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, Independence and 'Do No Harm'.

Child Abuse is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as: 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.' The main categories of abuse are defined by WHO as physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional and psychological abuse; and neglect. (see details in Annex2)

### The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who receive DAN's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- To provide staff and volunteers with the main principles that guide our approach to child protection;
- To provide clarity to staff, board, volunteers and visitors on how they should engage with children, young people when working for, on behalf of DAN.
- To help us make sure that employees, volunteers and other representatives are protected.

DAN believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them. The policies includes a

Code of Conduct that all staff, volunteers, visitors and Board members should sign before engagement.

## **Vision**

DAN envisions an inclusive Horn of Africa without poverty, hunger, and injustice.

## **Mission Statement**

DAN's humanitarian and development action focus on alleviating suffering, saving lives, building resilience and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups in the Horn of Africa. We do this by increasing their access to food, nutrition, WASH, shelter, livelihood, health, education, protection and targeted enabling specific services.

### **3. Guiding Principles of this Policy**

This Policy is based upon the following guiding principles:

- Zero tolerance of child abuse;
- Equal rights to protection from harm for all children;
- A commitment and Duty of care to children with whom we work, in contact with, or who are affected by our work and operations;
- Recognition and promotion of children's best interests; it shall be the primary consideration in our decision making;
- Promoting child empowerment and participation;
- Sharing responsibility for child protection;
- Use of a risk management approach to prevent child abuse; and
- Report and respond to all incidents of child abuse using fair and proper procedures when making a decision.
- Children have the right to have their voices heard and listened to.

#### **What we will do**

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse by:

##### **Awareness:**

We will ensure that all staff, volunteers, board members, and visitors are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

##### **Prevention:**

We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that we minimize the risks to children.

##### **Reporting:**

We will ensure that all staff and others are clear on what steps to take if concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

## **Responding:**

We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children when concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order to meet the above standards of reporting and responding, DAN, its staff and volunteers will also ensure that they:

- Take seriously any concerns raised;
- Do not let suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse, go unrecorded or unreported.
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- Support children, delegates or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation;
- Are guided throughout the child-protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.
- Providing effective management of staff and associates through supervision, support and training.

## **How we will ensure our above commitments are met:**

- All staff (volunteers, local or international) will be asked to abide by the 'Code of Conduct'.
- All staff including volunteers will have access to a copy of the child-protection policy.
- Recruitment procedures for all staff will include reference checks on suitability for working with children.
- All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff.
- All children and staff will have the contact details, and be briefed on the role of the child-protection focal person for the consultation. Any child-protection concerns and complaints should be reported to the child-protection focal person who will handle them in the strictest confidence.
- Systems will be established to investigate possible abuse once reported and to deal with it.

DAN recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that it has an obligation to put in place reasonable measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and well-being of vulnerable people with whom we work.

DAN commits to monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding and child protection policy. This policy and code of conduct will be reviewed every 2 years, this will include

checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy that should lead to policy update.

**The duty of notification:** any suspected violation or any actual violation of the current Code of Conduct must be reported immediately to the supervisor or the DAN Child Safeguarding Focal Point. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire procedure.

The designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Focal Point at DAN for 2020-2023 will be:

**Mr. Abdikarim Mohamud Sh. Muse**

**Title: Administration and Finances Manager.**

**Tel: 063-4155813 (Telesom) / 0659042266 (Somtel)**

## CODE OF CONDUCT:

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I, [\_\_\_\_\_], engaged by [DAN], agree that while working for DAN, I will:

- Treat children and their care-givers with respect by valuing them, listening to them.
- Not hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Not develop physical and/or sexual relations with children or their family members.
- Not develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Protect children under my care from bullying by other children and staff.
- Provide access for people to talk about any concerns they may have
- No spend time alone with children away from others.
- Not assist a child to leave their community, even with the consent of parents/carers, or offer children the chance to visit my country of residence.
- Not exchange personal contact details with children.
- Not develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Not act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Not use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage;
- Not behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Not have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight in their room;
- Not sleep in the same room or bed as a child;
- Not do things for children of an intimate nature that they can do for themselves;
- Not permit or participate in behavior of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Not discriminate against, show differential treatment or favor particular children to the exclusion of others. This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list.
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- A DAN worker has the responsibility to report any known or suspected cases of alleged misconduct against beneficiaries to senior management (as outlined in the reporting pathway) immediately. Strict confidentiality must be maintained to protect all individuals involved.
- Ensure fully informed consent is sought from a parent or guardian before gathering any case studies, photos or video of children.
- Never photograph, video or interview a reluctant child, even with parental or guardian consent.

- Ensure that children are suitably dressed. Never take images of children with no clothing, appearing to be wearing no clothing or wearing transparent clothing;
- Never publish any story, image or video which could put a child, her/his family or community at risk, even if the child's identity is concealed;
- Inform children and communities of their right to report any worrying situations and how they can raise a concern
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures;

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I have read and understand this Code of Conduct. I commit myself to exercise my duties as an employee of DAN in accordance with this Code of Conduct. I understand that if I do not conform to the Code of Conduct I may face disciplinary sanctions which may result in the termination of my engagement with DAN.

Furthermore, I declare that I have no criminal records regarding an offence towards a child (which I have not previously declared) nor do I know of any reason why anyone would deem me unsuitable to work with children.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Function: \_\_\_\_\_

Snr Manager's title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ANNEX 2 – Definitions - WHO’s definitions/forms of Child Abuse**

Physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in - or has a high likelihood of resulting in - harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are - by virtue of their age or stage of development - in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim.

### **Emotional and psychological abuse**

Emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child’s physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment

### **Neglect**

Neglect includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or other family member to provide for the development and well-being of the child - where the parent is in a position to do so - in one or more of the following areas:

- Health
- Education
- Emotional development
- Nutrition
- Shelter and safe living conditions



## **ANNEX3: Safeguarding Child Protection Focal Point**

The Safeguarding Child Protection Focal Point within DAN is the primary source of advice and support in relation to child safeguarding concerns and the implementation of the Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy. It should be understood that the Safeguarding & Child Protection Focal Point is not solely responsible for child safeguarding - this responsibility rests with everyone. The ultimate responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Managing Director.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Child Protection Focal Point: To support DAN's operations with the day to day implementation of the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

### **Specific duties include:**

- To act as the main point of contact on behalf of DAN for child safeguarding
- To ensure that staff, board members, volunteers and visitors are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and their responsibilities under it (for example by providing training and guidance);
- To train the full-time, part-time, and temporary employees, volunteers and board members about identifying possible abuse or neglect, and reporting suspected abuse;
- To train or provide information to parents/guardians about DAN's Safeguarding and child protection policy;
- To advise and support staff and partners with the implementation of the safeguarding policy - including risk assessments;
- Establish links with specialist child welfare, health and law enforcement contacts in order to have information available if an incident occurs and/or external advice is needed;
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy and our commitment to children's rights is made known to children, families and communities who work with DAN, and that the policy is accessible;
- Ensure that the name and contact details of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point are made available so that people know how to raise a concern/where to seek advice;
- To act as first point of contact for concerns regarding child protection incidents and to raise those concerns to the DAN Manager or operations manager as appropriate;
- Keep an accurate record of any incidents
- To support the implementation and monitoring of the Child Safeguarding Policy by providing an annual progress report.