**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

EMPOWERMENT FOR THE POOR-UGANDA

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**PURPOSE**

This document establishes Empowerment for the poor- Uganda policy regarding the protection of Children in our Programs. Empowerment for the poor-Uganda (EFPU) is committed to supporting and respecting Children’s rights and protecting Children from harm. If any part of the policy contradicts with local law, the law will supersede in regard to that provision. This policy applies to any member of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda who works with Children on different projects, Programs or special assignments as part of their job.

**POLICY**

EFPU will not tolerate any form of abuse or Exploitation of Children in its Programs.

**DEFINITIONS**

Best Interests of the Child – A principle that applies to all actions concerning Children and requires active measures to protect Children’s rights. These measures should promote Children’s survival, growth and well-being and support and assist parents and other caregivers to realize Children’s rights. This includes Child participation to ensure that the opinions of Children are heard in matters affecting them.

Child Abuse – Child Abuse may include Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, neglect/failure to provide, emotional maltreatment and exploitation of Children.

Child Protection – The responsibility, actions and measures taken to prevent and respond to Abuse, Exploitation and Violence against Children

Children – Any person, of either sex, who is or appears to be under the age of 18 years.

Emotional Abuse – involves acts or omissions by parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or caregivers that cause or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders. Emotional maltreatment can include verbal threats, socially isolating a Child, intimidation, Exploitation, terrorizing or routinely making unreasonable demands on a Child.

Exploitation – refers to situations whereby an abuser makes unfair profit and/or takes advantage of unequal power and/or economic status of a Child.

Headquarters – EFPU is located in Kiwawu, Malangala Sub County, Mityana District

Medication – A medicinal substance such as a topical ointment or other drug used to treat a disease or relieve pain

Neglect/Failure to Provide – This occurs when a Child’s parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or caregivers do not provide the requisite attention to the Child’s emotional, psychological or physical development when they have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so or failure to protect the Child from exposure to danger.

Personal Information – This includes but is not limited to any information that can be linked to a Child or used to identify a Child.

Physical Abuse – A type of abuse that includes the deliberate application of force to any part of a Child’s body, which results or may result in a non-accidental harm or injury to the Child. It may include shaking, choking, biting, kicking, burning, poisoning, holding a Child under water or any other harmful or dangerous use of force or restraint.

Program – A set of strategically connected coherent projects and initiatives aligned with a long-term commitment by EFPU and its collaborators that empower youth and women and related vulnerable groups to achieve socially, economically and environmentally secure and resilient livelihoods.

Sexual Abuse – A type of abuse when an adult or youth uses a Child for sexual purposes. Sexual abuse includes fondling, intercourse, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, permitting, encouraging or requiring a Child to engage in any of the following activities if they occur between EFPU’s Workforce in Ugandan communities and a Child – using or engaging in sexually provocative language, acts or conduct toward a Child; rough-housing or engaging in conduct which involves physical contact with a Child and which is sexually suggestive in nature; kissing, fondling, caressing, patting or pinching a Child or engaging in sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct designed to sexually stimulate either the member of EFPU’s Workforce , the Child or both; using sexual remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunting about a Child’s body or sexual orientation or uttering, either verbally or in writing, invitations, requests or sexually suggestive remarks or displaying pornographic or sexually suggestive material to a Child; conduct of a sexual nature for the stimulation, gratification, profit and self-interest of a member of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda who is in a position of trust or authority or with whom the Child is in a relationship of dependency; and/or prostitution or production of material of a pornographic nature.

Symptoms of Child Abuse – Physical, behavioral or verbal signs may indicate Child Abuse. (See “recognizing Child Abuse” section below for specific signs.)

Workforce - A general term, with no expressed or implied legal implications intended, used to identify all individuals working with EFPU, including but not limited to employees, temporary workers, interns, seasonal workers, and volunteers.

**PROCEDURES**

EFPU will take appropriate measures to address risk factors and prevent Abuse and Exploitation before it occurs. Measures include but are not limited to this policy and related procedures, communications, reporting tools and training and raising awareness of practices to minimize risks to Children.

**Screening**

Applicable members of EFPU ’s Workforce in Uganda will perform detailed background checks for all members of its Workforce in Uganda who will come into contact with Children. Background checks will, when allowed by Uganda law and when applicable, include a certificate of good conduct, police reference checks (or equivalent), verification that applicant is not listed in any national registry of child offenders, a detailed application, an interview process and references who support the applicant’s suitability to work with Children. Uses of these screening procedures are not limited to the pre-employment process; background checks may be run on existing employees in accordance with established procedures.

**Awareness, Acknowledgment, Capacity Building**

EFPU will ensure all members of its Workforce in Uganda who are involved with Children’s Programs are aware of Child Protection risks, policies and procedures including national laws and international instruments involving Children, as applicable.

This policy must be acknowledged by all members of EFPU ’s Workforce in Uganda who work with Children.

All members of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda who will work with Children’s Programs are required to complete a EFPU approved training annually which will include topics on how to appropriately prevent, detect and respond to Child Abuse and Exploitation. These members of the Workforce in Uganda are required to complete mandatory training no less than 12 months from last training activity. EFPU ’s Human Resources Department will assist the Uganda office in organizing and reporting on training. Any in-person training should be discussed with HR.

**Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination**

EFPU recognizes that girls and boys may face different risks relating to their safety and protection. All Children have the equal right to protection regardless of race, color, sex, language, sexuality, disability, religion, political or other opinions, national, social or indigenous origin, property, birth or other status.

**Participation of Children**

Children must be actively, meaningfully and ethically involved in all aspects of preventing, responding and monitoring incidents of Child Abuse and Exploitation. Children must not be treated as simply objects of concern but rather listened to and taken seriously and treated as individual people with their own views and interests.

**Reporting Mechanisms for Children and Staff**

Individuals, including Children, may anonymously report any concerns related to the wellbeing, safety or protection of a Child using EFPU’s Whistleblower tool. EFPU should provide project participants with relevant information on how to report concerns.

Participants may also verbally report concerns to any member of EFPU ’s Workforce or anonymously in writing to the Program Manager or Executive Director.

Members of EFPU’s Workforce should become familiar with the reporting tools and how to respond to any reported concerns. When there are reasonable grounds to suspect Child Abuse, EFPU Workforce should report the suspected abuse to the EFPU Disciplinary Committee and/or appropriate governmental authorities and the parents, legal guardians or caregivers of the abused Children in accordance with Uganda law.

**Recognizing Symptoms of Child Abuse**

Members of EFPU ’s Workforce should watch for signs of Child Abuse. These signs may include:

* Physical signs such as:
  1. Lacerations and bruises
  2. Nightmares
  3. Irritation, pain or injury in the genital area
  4. Difficulty with urination
  5. Discomfort when sitting
  6. Torn or bloody underclothing
  7. Venereal disease
* Behavioral signs:
  1. Anxiety with approaching EFPU’s premises or a room used for Programs

with Children

1. Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
2. Sexual self-consciousness
3. Acting out of sexual behavior
   1. Withdrawal from activities and friends

* Verbal signs:
  1. “I don’t like (insert name).”

1. “(Insert name) does things to be when we are alone.” o “(Insert name) fooled around with me.”

o “I don’t like to be alone with (insert name).”

**Response and Follow-up**

All measures taken to respond to Child Abuse or Exploitation shall respect the Child’s rights, local laws and take into account the Best Interests of the Child and endeavor to ensure no further harm comes to the Child as a result of any actions taken by EFPU. Efforts to work in conjunction with other service providers, specialists, parents, legal guardians, caregivers and others should be explored when appropriate. After any incident or report of Abuse or Exploitation, proper measures should be taken to ensure organizational learning, evaluation and follow-up takes place. Such measures should include, at minimum, a lessons learned document as well as assurance that each allegation will be investigated and a conclusion drawn.

EFPU will retain written records at Headquarters, in accordance with law and local EFPU’s policies, of all reports of Child Abuse, including, but not limited to the date of the report and the date of the alleged abuse, the name and address of the Child and his/her parent(s), legal guardian(s), the name of the member of EFPU ’s Workforce in Uganda who made the report, the name of the governmental contact to whom the report was made and a clear description of the facts that led to the report, as well as any other available information. EFPU office should advise its insurance provider of the complaint of Child Abuse and retain records of any such reports. If EFPU receives any grants from a funder for whom this is a vested concern, EFPU Headquarters will advise the funder of any complaints of Child Abuse either by email or writing.

All records should be kept within the appropriate files of EFPU ’s Headquarters in accordance with EFPU policies and procedures.

**Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

The Executive Director in collaboration with EFPU’s Human Resources department and the EFPU Uganda Human Resource Committee is responsible for reviewing this policy and related procedures on a regular basis, but no more than every three years when possible.

The Executive Director shall also be responsible for informing all partners when assistance is needed in investigations.

**Sanction and Discipline of Members of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda**

When an allegation of Child Abuse is made against a member of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda, that member of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda will be immediately suspended from all duties with EFPU Uganda (with pay, if applicable) to protect Children from further harm. The EFPU Uganda Disciplinary Committee will immediately perform an investigation. If a member of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda is convicted of Child Abuse, the individual will be immediately terminated with cause from his or her position (in accordance with Uganda law) and will be banned from entering EFPU property or participating in EFPU activities following termination.

**Informed Consent**

The applicable member of EFPU’s Workforcewill provide Children and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) with all necessary details to make an informed decision regarding their participation in programs and activities, including any voice recordings,

Video or photographs of Children. Children and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be informed of how their images may be used and be supported in identifying and evaluating any associated risks. Personal information and/or images of Children will only be used after informed consent has been obtained in writing from both the Child and his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). After consent is received, discretion should be used in sharing any Personal Information and should only be shared in compliance with EFPU’s global Confidentiality Policy.

**Medication**

Members of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda should not give or apply any Medication to Children. Should a medical emergency arise, a member of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda will contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) after contacting emergency personnel.

**Code of Conduct for Organizational Personnel Working with Children**

This Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive nor exclusive list and is complimentary to EFPU’s Global Code of Conduct. EFPU will consider all related actions and behaviors which may compromise the rights and protection of Children.

Members of EFPU’s Workforce in Uganda must:

* Prevent Child Abuse

1. Be aware of potential risks and take appropriate action to minimize risks
2. Create an environment in which concerns can easily and safely be raised and discussed
   1. Recognize and remedy potential situations which may lead to violent acts against Children

* Create a Child-friendly environment
  1. Contribute to an environment in which Children are respected and encouraged

to discuss their views, concerns and rights

1. Ensure that Children are aware of their rights, policies and resources which are available to them if there is a problem
   1. Work with Children to define what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior with adults

* Report and Respond
  1. Report any Child Abuse and protection concerns and take appropriate actions
  2. Ensure the Child and, if appropriate, his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are well-informed and participate in the decision-making and that the types of interventions are agreed upon

Members of EFPU’s Workforce must never:

* Abuse or Exploit a Child or behave in a way that places a Child at risk of harm
* Exchange money, gifts, employment, goods or services for sex with a Child, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or Exploitative behavior or any other behavior that could be deemed Exploitative of a Child
* Have a Child they are working with stay overnight at their home unsupervised or sleep in the same room or bed with a Child
* Do things for Children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
* Offend, insult, humiliate or degrade Children or perpetrate any form of Emotional Abuse
* Discriminate or provide favorable treatment to one Child
* Kiss or coax a Child to kiss a member of EFPU’s Workforce
* Engage in extended hugging, tickling or coaching of a Child to hug a member of EFPU’s Workforce
* Touch a Child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit
* Carry a Child or have them sit on the lap of a member of EFPU’s Workforce
* Be alone with a Child
* Engage in prolonged physical contact with a Child
* Restrain a Child
* Discipline a Child using any form of physical contact, emotional or psychological pressure, Abuse or intimidation.

Members of EFPU’s Workforce should consider all related actions and behavior which may compromise the rights and Protection of Children.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

For further information, please contact the Executive Director or HR@empowermentuganda.org.

**HISTORY**

**Revisions:**

**Origin:**

9 April 2017