



## **WOMEN RIGHT ADVOCACY INITIATIVE (WRAI)**

**P.O. BOX 350-70200,Wajir**

**Tel: 0725455045**

**Email:[advocacywomenrights3@gmail.com](mailto:advocacywomenrights3@gmail.com)**

**Wajir – Kenya.**

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### **WRAI Child protection Policy**

At WRAI we take our Child Protection Policy commitments very seriously. We do everything we reasonably can to ensure WRAI is safe for children. Despite the favorable constitutional provisions and considerable progress made in strengthening child protection systems in the country, there are many children in Kenya who are in need of special care and protection, who experience violence, abuse and exploitation.

WRAI ensure that child protection measures are integrated into all core systems, processes, practices and activities that we engage in. They help us make sure that whatever we do, risks of abuse and exploitation to children are minimized and we continue to uphold our commitment to ‘Do No Harm’

WRAI has being on the forefront, in ensuring protection of boys, girls, and adolescents in Kenya from violence, abuse, exploitation, harmful cultural practices through improved access to care, support, justice and other services needed to ensure their physical, mental and social wellbeing in development and humanitarian contexts.

### **The role and duty of WRAI staff in Child Protection**

WRAI staff and volunteers by the nature of their work, interact with vulnerable communities and children and will therefore be aware of sensitive information concerning children. This information may be called upon as evidence in child protection investigations or to inform decision-making. WRAI staff and volunteers may become aware of infringements of Rights, or, allegations of infringements, or, stories of infringements. Sometimes circumstances and intuition will leave the worker suspecting an infringement of rights

Concerns must be reported immediately to the staff line manager who in turn will report to the Chief Executive Officer

- Whenever a staff/volunteers of WRAI has concerns of abuse or exploitation, detailed notes of circumstances and dialogue must be included in records and kept confidential. These records may be used as evidence to save a child from abuse and exploitation
- Concerns that are evidenced by impairment of health, physical injury, sexual exploitation, criminal activity or threats must be reported immediately to statutory child protection agencies or equivalent authorities.
- Any knowledge regarding staff/Volunteers prior record of children based activities which are questionable should be raised with the line manager

### **The role and duty of WRAI line managers in Child Protection**

- To report and record any incident of concern about child protection to the appropriate child Protection agency.
- Ensure staff are aware of, and provide induction to, as well as have access to Child and Human Rights documents
- Ensure that staff are aware of procedures for reporting concerns and their responsibilities in reporting
- Ensure community and children are aware of, and have easy access to reporting authorities and procedures for reporting concerns and complaints
- Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought for any activity with a child and encourage Parental participation in all activities involving children.
- Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought before taking any images or footage of children. Ensure that the parent or guardian understands the purpose of this activity and how the images or footage will be used
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and ensure these are supervised Appropriately
- Be involved and available to the community in all work with children
- Ensure that staff are accountable for the welfare of children during WRAI activities
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists amongst staff to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed

- Ensure that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour by WRAI staff does not go unchallenged
- Empower children – discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

### **The role and duty of Chief Executive Officer/Representatives in Child Protection**

- Be aware of the local law applying to child protection and the agencies responsible. Ensure that all staff are aware of these.
- To nominate a staff member who would act as a focal point for raising awareness of the Child Protection Policy among staff and partners within County Programmes
- Create procedures for reporting of and investigating suspected cases of abuse and Exploitation
  - Disciplinary procedures will be implemented for staff members found to have violated the Child Protection Policy
- Ensure all staff are trained on how to recognize child abuse and exploitation and taking appropriate action

### **Implications of Non-Compliance**

Any staff member found to be engaged in the following acts will be summarily dismissed:

- Inducing or coercing a child to engage in any sexual activity
- Any commercially exploitative activities with the children including child labour or trafficking
- Use of children’s photographs for pornographic or other inappropriate use
- Subjecting any child to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Mistreating or depriving the child in any way including on the basis of the child’s refusal to Write a letter to a sponsor or to have his/her photograph taken

### **WRAI Staffs Recruitment, induction and training**

WRAI ensures its recruitment processes are rigorous, in line with statutory requirements and best practice guidance that are set within the organization policies.

WRAI will conduct reference checks to see the person’s suitability to work with the organization this includes all staffs, volunteers, interns and government officials engaged by the organization

And will terminate the contract or refuse to engage an individual whose back ground check will show any criminal records. WRAI staff, volunteers and interns are sensitized on safeguarding policy before

any engagement within the first week of joining the organization.

### **Induction of staff working directly with children**

At the beginning of each project, during induction of new staff and on a continuous basis, all staff will consider and be informed of their responsibilities to individuals and communities in ensuring Human Rights and Children's Rights are actively upheld. Staff should be aware how the Convention applies to their work, society and how the Rights are enforced.

### **Training for Staff**

Appropriate and adequate training and refresher courses must be planned and implemented for staff and partners working with children and those supervising them in the following areas:

- Laws relating to child labour, abuse, exploitation and trafficking
- Various government authorities and bodies working in this area
- Recognizing abuse
- Procedures on how to report abuse

**General Guidelines for activities with children** - In general it is inappropriate for staff and partners to:

- Spend unnecessary time alone with children
- Take children to home of staff, particularly if they will be alone with staff unless they are acting to protect the children
- Inappropriately use children to solicit support, financial or otherwise
- Promote any form of child labour – exploitative or otherwise

**In handling internally displaced children, it is important to consider the following principles:**

- **Choice of return:** No child should be obliged to go back home, when he/she has founded fears of their security
- **Priority in safeguarding life and dignity:** Child survival should be given priority and needed resources should be mobilized to save life and secure human dignity
- **Parental responsibility:** Due regard should be given to ensure children are not separated from their parents and/or families. The place of the family must be upheld, unless it poses danger to the child
- The role of the state and state authorities should be underscored. It is the responsibility of government to safeguard the rights of internally displaced children.
- **Gender:** In all actions, the protection of children should be ensured that they are safe with their parents, guardians and service providers. Care should be taken that children

are not left in the single care of adults of the opposite sex, especially girls. This does not apply to natural and adoptive parents in normal circumstances

- The right of displaced children to their identity should be safeguarded. Children should not be forced to change their names, religion or traditions.

Approved by

Fatuma Abdullahi

Executive Director

Women Right Advocacy Initiative

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fatuma', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.