



H4BF Policy

Child Protection

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Child Protection Policy

Say 'YES!' To Keeping Children Safe

As a Humanitarian Response based organisation whose work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), H4BF is committed to enhancing sustainable development within communities and improvement of women and children's standards of living. This includes ensuring of fulfilment of children's rights including their rights to protection. H4BF is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring children's right to protection under Article 19 of the UNCRC is 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 H4BF and take stringent measures against any of our Staff, Associates, Visitors or Managers who abuse a child. Our decisions and actions in response to Child protection concerns and violation 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, for the purposes of this policy, **a Child** is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1).
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 H4BF undertakes to protect children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with H4BF's Staff, Associates and Visitors and/or their participation in any H4BF 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 and local procedures; and incidents are analysed to ensure continued learning and growth in the field of organisational child protection.

4. **H4BF Staff** refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of H4BF's branches, including all Regional Offices and National Headquarters.
5. **H4BF Associates** refers to a range of paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support the organisation. It includes, among others, members of boards, 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 H4BF)

6. **H4BF Visitors** refers to a range of persons who are visiting our programs and may come in contact with children through H4BF, including journalists, media, researchers, and celebrities.
7. **H4BF Managers** refers to Staff who have responsibility for line managing or supervising the work of H4BF's Staff or Associates.

B. Scope of the Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy applies to all H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates, H4BF Visitors and H4BF Managers who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of the policy. It is intended that this policy will set a minimum global standard for all H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates and H4BF Visitors; H4BF Country Offices and subsidiaries as well as National Organisations. Where required by law or local practices, H4BF Country Offices and subsidiaries as well as National Organisations may enhance the standards as set out in this policy. This commitment will be evidenced through signing the policy.

C. Principles

This policy is informed by a set of principles that are derived from the UNCRC 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. H4BF's child-centered 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. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
6. H4BF has specific responsibilities to children who come in contact with us. No child must come to harm as a result of their engagement with H4BF as a sponsored child, a participant in a H4BF program or as part of any H4BF fundraising or advocacy campaign.
7. These specific responsibilities extend to those individuals or organisations who are associated with H4BF. Therefore, **everyone** working for or associated with H4BF's work must be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy.

D. H4BF's vision for Child Protection

H4BF 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 H4BF.

This policy aims to ensure that H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates, H4BF Visitors and H4BF Managers, as appropriate to their engagement with H4BF, 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 H4BF'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 H4BF 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.

H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates, H4BF Visitors and H4BF Managers 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 local office procedures and this policy. H4BF Staff may also use H4BF's Whistle Blowing policy in this event.
3. Respond to a Child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
4. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child abuse.
5. Contribute to building an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
6. 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 H4BF policies and procedures.
7. 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 H4BF's work or share their own personal contact details with such individuals. [For H4BF 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 H4BF policies and procedures, has the consent of the Child's parents or guardian and is supervised by the relevant line or supervising manager].

8. Never disclose, or support the disclosure of, information that identifies sponsored families or children, through any medium, unless that disclosure is in accordance with standard H4BF policies and procedures and/or has the explicit consent of H4BF. Media include paper, photographs and social media.
9. Never make any contact with a Child or family members associated with H4BF's work that is not supervised by a (or another) member of H4BF Staff. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails and letters.

H4BF Staff must:

10. Comply with the behaviours detailed in H4BF's Code of Conduct.
11. Only arrange visits by sponsors to meet with sponsored children in a protected space as chosen by the H4BF Country Office. This may include in their homes with the consent of the Child's family and on the advice of the Country Office staff who always accompany the visit.
12. Only provide the personal contact details of sponsors to former sponsored children aged 18 or over (not the other way round) to enable them to make direct contact after the Child's graduation from the sponsorship scheme with the prior approval of the sponsor, the former sponsored child and a favourable risk assessment collated and approved by the Country Office

H4BF Managers

13. All H4BF Managers must ensure that, whilst engaged with H4BF, H4BF Associates sign up to either H4BF's Code of Conduct¹ or to guidance on appropriate behaviour towards children that is appropriate to their engagement with H4BF and is developed by a H4BF Manager using the Code of Conduct as a guide.
14. All H4BF Directors must ensure that each H4BF 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 H4BF* 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
15. All H4BF Managers must ensure that H4BF Staff who have 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.

F. Personal Conduct Outside Work or Association With H4BF

H4BF does not dictate the belief and value systems by which H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates, H4BF Visitors and H4BF Managers 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.

¹ For certain categories of H4BF Associates the Code of Conduct requires this

H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates, H4BF Visitors and H4BF Managers 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 Boards of H4BF are ultimately accountable for this policy. The Director and executive directors of H4BF 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 H4BF's Code of Conduct by all parts of H4BF.

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

- For H4BF Staff or H4BF Managers - disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal.
- For H4BF Associates or H4BF Visitors - up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with H4BF.
- Where relevant - appropriate legal or other such actions.

Where concerns exist about the conduct of H4BF Staff, H4BF Associates, H4BF Visitors and H4BF Managers 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 in which they work; and/or by H4BF in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary action for H4BF Staff and H4BF 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.

This policy has been reviewed and is recommended for approval by:

Ngo Abdullai (signed): _____
Director

Ngo Abdullai Bonfegha
Founder / Director



This policy has been reviewed and is approved by:

Dr. Ngang Peter Achu
PhD in Public Policy and Administration
(signed): _____