Ntengwe for Community Development

Matabeleland North

Zimbabwe

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

1. About Ntengwe for Community Development

Ntengwe for Community Development is a registered Welfare Organization (WO42/2010) with the government of Zimbabwe. Ntengwe for Community Development works with community members to promote Rights, Viable Livelihoods, Economic Strengthening and Gender Equality, in the process, enabling responsive environments for young women, men and children using rights-based interventions. We use the media (films, dramas, IEC, newspapers) that are locally relevant as entry routes in the communities to promote Behaviour Change; Mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS (Home Based Care); Enhance Economic sustenance (Livelihoods) and promote streams of equality between male and female (Gender Advocacy). As a community development organization, also working with children, especially disabled children our work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and Ntengwe is committed to ensuring the fulfilment of children's rights including the rights of protection. Ntengwe is committed to protection children from harm and ensuring children's right to protection under Article 19 of the UNCRC is fully realized.

Our Vision

The Vision of Ntengwe is to contribute towards the development of:

"Today's resilient communities for a better tomorrow"

Our Mission

"We encourage Community-led development in support of economic, climate and social justice to end poverty"

Ntengwe for Community Development Institutional Objectives

- To empower women and girls on gender equity and equality through access to material and enabling resources;
- To empower the chronically ill people and those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS by equipping them with skills to increase their coping mechanisms and lead normal lives
- To support and empower disabled persons, especially women, youth and children with special needs to fully realize their potential by involving them in all spheres of life.
- To keep children safe within their own families. Work cooperatively with parents to make that happen and seek to help families by strengthening the ability of parents, guardians or custodians to provide good care for their children.

Background to the Child Protection Policy

This Child Protection Policy builds on the foundation of initiatives originally initiated by Ministry of Social Welfare. This had the influence of ensuring that most nongovernmental organizations established Child Protection Policies (CPPs). Organisations further in partnership with the above ministry formed Child Protection Committees (CPCs) at ward and district levels. Ntengwe for Community Development came up with its first Child Protection Police in 2009 as a result of increased evidence of children's vulnerability in Binga and Hwange districts. The same Policy was revised at management level in 2011. We are guided by the strong belief that children under the age of 18 require enabling environments that promote, protect and safeguard their rights if they are to meaningfully participate in development processes that affects their lives. In November 2013, Ntengwe for Community Development participated in two Child Protection Policy workshops supported by our funding partner Kindernothilfe in Harare. We realised as a result of the training that standards relating to child safety have changed and that there was need to revise our own policy in line with our legal and cultural contexts.

We sought and got the approval of the Ntengwe Board of Governors in January 2014 to revise our original Child Protection Policy. We in addition, informed our key stakeholders in particular the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, Home Affairs Victim Friendly Unit, Ministry of Justice, Local Government, Ministry of Health and Child Care, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, traditional leaders in communities and community stakeholders including women and children about the processes that we intended to undertake in both Binga and Hwange districts in order to revise the Child Protection Policy. Working with established core teams in both Binga and Hwange Districts, we collectively and in consultation with the Board and all these stakeholders worked to produce this amended Child Protection Policy from January to July 2014.

This Child Protection Policy has been revised against the background that in all the districts we operate, cases of child abuse in particular neglect, sexual and physical abuse remain a cause for concern. This is in spite of the fact that international standards providing for child protection have improved and that Zimbabwe has put in place a new constitution which is progressive in terms of promoting the rights of people including children. This Child Protection Policy is based on these improved international standards, Zimbabwe's improved constitutional provisions and the lived realities faced by children on the ground.

Core Statement

Ntengwe for Community Development values and encourages the participation of children and young people in all programme activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We recognize the dignity and rights of all children and are committed to ensuring their protection at all levels and spaces for development including at home, school, public and private places.

We will do all in our power to create a safe environment for children and young people in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the organisation. Ntengwe for Community Development commit to ensure that its staff, volunteers, consultants, funding partners and stakeholders will at all times act in the best interests of children as we value these interests as of paramount importance always. 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 Ntengwe for Community Development and take stringent measures against any Ntengwe for Community Development Staff, Ntengwe for Community Development Associates, Ntengwe for Community Development Visitors or Ntengwe for Community Development Managers who abuse a child. Our decisions and actions in response to Child protection concerns and breaches of policy will be guided by the principle of "the best interests of the child".

Aim and outreach of the policy

The Policy applies to all members of staff, Board members, volunteers, funding partners, stakeholders, consultants, visitors, associates who work in our name and community members who all work with and come into contact with children. The key aims of this policy are:

- To ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse especially through working with agencies locally, which have responsibility for the protection of children.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan.
- To ensure that the organisation staff have the responsibility to minimise the risk of child abuse happening within the organisation's activities and programmes, in partner agencies and in their homes.
- 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.

Legal framework

The United Nations' Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Constitution of Zimbabwe all give recognition to the rights of children. In particular these and other legislations have provisions to ensure that children under the age of 18 years of age have the rights and enabling environments that empower them to make choices and participate in development processes by safeguarding them from harm, abuse and discrimination.

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention builds on Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children, and provides that:

PART I

Article 1
For the purposes of the Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 3
3.1 In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or Private Social Welfare Institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 34
States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

(a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
(b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
(c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)
Apart from these international statutes, Zimbabwe also signed and ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) which provides a number of key relevant clauses to Child protection policies. In particular;

Article 4: Best interests of the child
In all judicial or administrative proceedings affecting a child who is capable of communicating his/her own views, an opportunity shall be provided for the views of the child to be heard either directly or through an impartial representative as a party to the proceedings, and those views shall be taken into consideration by the relevant authority in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws.

Article 7: Freedom of Expression
Every child who is capable of communicating his or her own views shall be assured the rights to express his opinions freely in all matters and to disseminate his opinions subject to such restrictions as are prescribed by laws.

The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Section 19 of the Constitution provides specifically for the rights of children. In particular Section 19 sub sections 1-3 provides that:

1) The state must adopt policies and measures to ensure that, in matters relating to children, the best interests of children concerned are paramount.

2) The state must adopt reasonable policies and measures within the resources limited to it to ensure that children –

    a) Enjoy family or parental care, or appropriate care when removed from the family environment

    b) Have shelter and basic nutrition, health care and social services

    c) Are protected from maltreatment, neglect or any form of abuse: and

d) Have access to appropriate education and training

3) The State must take appropriate legislative and other measures –

a) To protect children from exploitative practices: and

b) To ensure that children are not required or permitted to perform work or provide services that –

i. are inappropriate for the children's age; or

ii. place at risk the children's well being, education, physical or mental or health or spiritual, moral or social development

Section 81 of the constitution further elaborates on these rights of children by providing in section 81 sub sections 1-3 provides that:

(1) Every child, that is to say every boy and girl under the age of eighteen years, has the right –

a) To equal treatment before the law, including the right to be heard;

b) To be given a name and family name;

c) In the case of a child who is –

i. Born in Zimbabwe; or

ii. Born outside Zimbabwe and is a Zimbabwean citizen by descent; to the prompt provision of a birth certificate;

d) To family or parental care, or to appropriate care when removed from the family environment;

e) To be protected from economic and sexual exploitation, from child labour, and from maltreatment, neglect or any other form of abuse:

f) To education, health care services, nutrition and shelter;

g) Not to be recruited into a militia force or take part in armed conflict or hostilities:

h) Not to be compelled to take part in any political activity; and

i) Not to be detained except as a measure of last resort and, if detained –

I. To be detained for the shortest appropriate period;

II. To be kept separately from detained persons over the age of eighteen years; and

III. To be treated in a manner, and kept in conditions, that takes account of the child's age.

2) A child's best interests are paramount in every matter concerning the child.

3) Children are entitled to adequate protection by the courts, in particular by the High Court as their upper guardian.

The Children's Protection and Adoption Act [Chapter 5:06]

The Act is Zimbabwe's key legislation governing the rights of abused and neglected children to protection. The Act is designed "to make provision for the protection, welfare and supervision of children and juveniles". In Part VII of the Children's Adoption and Protection Act is clear on promoting the Child's best interest even in court and adoption proceedings.

Given that Zimbabwe has signed, ratified and formulated International, regional and national legislation that promotes the best interests and development of children, this legislation will collectively be the legal framework guiding the Ntengwe for Community Development Child Protection Policy.

Definition of key terms

Child

For the purposes of this Child Protection Policy, a "child" is defined as anyone under the age of 18 in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Constitution of Zimbabwe.

Child Abuse

- According to the World Health Organization Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse and Prevention (1999), "Child abuse" or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other treatment 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.
- Similarly (http://www.nspcc.org.uk/documents/safetyofchild.pdf.) note "cruelty to children" or "child abuse" as behaviour that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child.

Taking from these definitions, four types of abuses can be discerned:

- **Physical abuse:** is actual or likely physical injury to a child, such as hitting, kicking, pinching, shaking, poisoning, drowning and inflicting pain on a child where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflected knowingly and not prevented.
- **Emotional abuse:** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that causes severe adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.
- **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, and informed consent is not or cannot be given. The activities may involve physical

contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. These acts constitute a criminal offence.

- **Child neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or care-giver failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include neglect of, or not responding to a child's basic emotional needs.
- **Direct contact with children:** being in the physical presence of a child or children including regular and short term contact. This could involve undertaking play activities, workshops and games with children at schools, in communities and churches. This could also involve project site visits with partners, meetings, development platforms and attending workshops at which children are also present.

Indirect contact with children

1) Having access to information on children in the context of Ntengwe for Community Development work, such as children's names, locations, photographs and case studies.

2) An international organization or funding partner providing us with funds to work directly with children. While this is indirect, it however has an impact on children and gives the funding partner responsibility for child protection issues.

Partner or stakeholder: used interchangeably in this policy to refer to funding partners, government departments, community right holders, consultants, volunteers, researchers who through contact with us may for a long or short time work with children.

Child Protection: philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this context, it applies particularly to Ntengwe for Community Development and its partners towards children we work with and in our care.

Policy: a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

2. Behavioural Protocols within Ntengwe For Community Development

The Code of Behaviour for Ntengwe for Community Development will apply to any member of the Board, employee, officer, volunteer, intern, researcher, consultant, advisor, visitor, funding partner, stakeholders and community members who have direct contact with children. When working with children under the auspices of Ntengwe, these will sign a statement of commitment to abide by the code of conduct and child protection policy. The Code of conduct therefore includes guidance on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of adults towards children and of children towards children.

Code of Conduct

Ntengwe for Community Development believes strongly in children's rights to survival, protection, participation and development as enshrined in international, regional and national legislation including the constitution of Zimbabwe with its progressive provisions for the rights of children. This code of conduct has been developed in furtherance of the best interests of the child and must be interpreted by all in that spirit.

Equal Opportunities

Ntengwe is committed in promoting equal opportunities and to work in a non-discriminatory manner to promote equality of opportunity between:

- Children of different beliefs, racial group, sex or age
- Boys or girls in general
- Children living with disability and those without, children with disabilities should be same with other children
- Special input may be required if the child has severe or multiple disabilites
- Children with guardians and those without

Appropriate Standards of Behaviour

All parties to which this code applies **should**:

- ✓ Provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual development.
- ✓ Respect and encourage children's voices and views on issues that affect them
- ✓ Promote inclusiveness and involve all children irregardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status.
- ✓ Be very aware of the potential of peer abuse (children abusing other children including bullying)
- ✓ Develop means to protect younger and vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse
- ✓ Develop guidelines to address physical safety issues relative to the environment for instance project sites near roads, water bodies etc)
- ✓ Avoid meeting or assisting children when you are on your own and under circumstances which might be potentially questioned by others.
- ✓ Meet with a child in a central and public location whenever possible.
- ✓ Report immediately situations which occur which may be subject to misinterpretation to the designated Child Protection Officer.
- ✓ Visitors to Ntengwe for Community Development project and programme areas will not be left unsupervised. Ntengwe for Community Development staff, students and short term volunteers can be left unsupervised at the project areas if they have signed the Ntengwe for Community Development Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Ntengwe for Community Development drivers will not take a beneficiary child home without at least one other person being present in the vehicle, unless the child is a family member or custodial parent consents in writing.
- ✓ Adults will always be responsible for their behaviour and cannot blame the child, even if the child 'provokes' or acts in a 'seductive' way.
- ✓ If the code of conduct is broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her job and may be subject to criminal proceedings.

- ✓ All child protection cases, a multi-disciplinary approach should be used and agreement should be reached with who is responsible for the child protection investigation.
- ✓ Ntengwe will ensure that each child's confidentiality is clearly understood by all involved, this includes those situations where information must be shared with others in the best interest of a child safety.

Inappropriate Standards of Behaviour

All parties to which this code applies **should not**:

- ❖ Hit and physically assault a child
- ❖ Use language that may lead to emotional abuse of any children
- ❖ Embarrass, shame, humiliate or degrade a child
- ❖ Discriminate a child on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status.
- ❖ Develop a romantic and sexual relationship with a child
- ❖ Touch a child in an inappropriate way or expose them to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos and literature (A general guideline for touching inappropriately is not to touch children in areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt, but also includes kissing and tickling in an inappropriate way.)
- ❖ Encourage any inappropriate show of love or feelings to an adult by a child
- ❖ Initiate physical contact with children
- ❖ Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.

Guidelines for other stakeholders

Guidelines for persons visiting projects

- The code of conduct and the child protection policy shall be given to any person visiting the project site. Awareness before they come will be given well in advance. Any person visiting the project will sign the statement of commitment agreeing to abide by the code of conduct.
- The persons here will include, sponsors, donors, executive board members, partners, stakeholders, and any other persons where there is need to visit children.
- All Ntengwe for Community Development staff and volunteers are obliged to inform invited visitors about the policy and have a copy available for such visitors.
- If the Ntengwe Child Protection Policy is in any way violated by a Ntengwe for Community Development programme visitor**,** the Visitor will be removed from the activity and legal action may follow.

Guidelines for persons in direct contact with children

- The code of conduct and the child protection policy shall be given to the person actively involved in children's activities.
- The person responsible for conducting activities with children shall receive relevant and adequate training from the organisation in collaboration with relevant ministries or office before becoming fully responsible for children's activities.
- The person shall also sign the statement of commitment to adhere to the Child Protection Policy and other policies of the organization.
- Any such person must document in detail all curriculum activities done with children.

Guidelines for direct communication with children within the sponsorship system

This section refer to communication between Ntengwe for Community Development staff, volunteers and interns as well as our funding partners with whom our collective

work is defined as promoting sponsorship for the children who benefit from our partnerships and programme activities.

- Ntengwe for Community Development and its partners direct communication with children must preserve their value, dignity and self-worth, be decent and respectful, not seeking to exploit their situation
- In our direct communication with children, we must take special care to protect children's identities and specific geographic location. Therefore, to protect their identity Ntengwe will only post children's first names and will not distribute their last name or address.
- In any such direct communication, photos of children will be taken through their or parental verbal and or written consent depending on the case.
- Ntengwe for Community Development and its partners in the sponsorship system will not publish texts or images of children that are sensationalized, discriminatory and degrading or children are inappropriately clothed.
- Any information and direct communication with children will be limited to members of staff and partners who need to know and must be treated as confidential.

2.3 Standards for Human Resources

Job advertisement, recruitment, selection

- Before Ntengwe advertise, recruit and select an employee or volunteers, a clear job description will be formulated first specifying the terms of reference/role briefs for all posts including where short-term contracts, consultants are being recruited.
- Adverts and job descriptions for Ntengwe for Community Development will include a reference to our Commitment to child protection and our Child Protection Policy. Recruiting and hiring procedures will be according to child protection policy procedures where every hired personnel will have to comply.
- Before the Interview process prospective candidates will be asked to produce documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications.
- The Interview panel will ask candidates to describe their previous experience with children, provide at least two referees who can comment on their work with children or young people and sign a Character Reference form (see appendix).
- The Character Reference form will give details of any criminal convictions and investigations. If the Character Reference Form discloses any crimes related to child abuse or violence, Ntengwe for Community Development will not permit that person to become a staff member or employee.
- Job offers will only be made subject to satisfactory clearance from checking of all statutory records including police clearance, satisfactory verification of qualifications and the candidate's curriculum vitae.
- All jobs will include a probationary period and the condition that Ntengwe for Community Development will take appropriate action if at any time new information arises that will cast doubt on the employee's trustworthiness with children. Such information will be treated confidentially and disclosed to the employee for appropriate action.
- Candidates (whether staff members or volunteers) will sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they might be deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults in our organisation

Police Record Checks

- The Recruitment procedure will require all staff to undertake police record checks. Those staff working directly with children will be required to undertake a National Police Check done by the Criminal Investigations Department or where possible a relevant criminal history check in the past 5 years if a potential employee has lived for over 12 months in another.
- Such Police Record checks will be mandatory before prospective employees can be offered any job

Volunteer-programme

- This involves the recruiting of volunteers to assist in children programmes. If the position and agreed responsibilities involve contact with children, the recruiting and selection process will not differ from the approach used to hire permanent employees or consultants.
- All volunteers will undergo awareness training and receive continuing education in line with their responsibilities and roles on the issue of child protection.

Capacity Building

- Ntengwe for Community Development's commitment to child protection will be stated in relevant corporate documents and our website. We will agree to avail the policy to anyone who requests it.
- All employees of Ntengwe for Community Development staff (locally appointed and nationally appointed) will sign up to and abide by the attached code of conduct
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy
- Induction will include briefing on child protection issues and child protection policy and code of conduct
- Every workplace and areas of operation will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse cases and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.
- All managers have the responsibility for ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the Child Protection Policy, and for reminding them of its provisions as and when the need arises. Managers will be expected to take part in Child protection workshops to enhance their own capacity.
- Child protection and safety issues will be mainstreamed in all events of the organization that take place.

2.2 Standards for Communication

Awareness and information dissemination on the CPP and the organisation standards will be the focal point of ensuring that children and all parties involved are aware of such documents and procedures. Child protection awareness and requirements will be mainstreamed in any meetings, workshops and trainings so as to communicate the same message to our beneficiaries.

Protective measures for Children at Risk

Ntengwe for community Development will produce a well-devised risk-prevention plan which will recognize potential problems and establishes clear measures for avoiding them in events that involve children. In an educational setting, this can mean developing a strict code of conduct that limits contact between children and their caregivers and that prohibits actions that can — even unintentionally — place children in an uncomfortable or compromising positions. Also, the plan will include standards for disciplining children to maintain control while respecting their dignity, privacy and well-being while preventing physical injuries.

Declaration of Commitment for external reporters

Where programme activities involve external reporters, these will be made aware of the Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and to sign the statement of commitment to abide to these guidelines. In particular, external reporters will agree to abide to the general practice attached to this policy to ensure children are safeguarded from misuse of images and information (see appendix for general guidelines for external reporters).

3. Case Management System

The Ntengwe for Community Development Management will in all its districts of operations establish an organizational Child Protection Unit managed by a Child Protection Officer. These structures at the organizational level will work with the established village, ward and district Child Protection Committees and relevant government ministries including the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and the Victim Friendly Unit. These two Ministries due to their mandated role to deal with child protection issues will act as our Child Protection Ombudspersons.

The Child Protection Officer and the Organizational Child Protection Unit

- The Management of Ntengwe for Community Development will appoint the senior officer in each district as the Child Protection Officer. The appointed person should be in a position to have an ongoing role with the organization and should have undergone Child Protection Training. The Child Protection Officer will be the focal person for managing the Child Protection Policy in collaboration with the Child Protection Unit of the organization.
- The Child Protection Officer has a duty to document all cases of abuse from beginning to the end.
- The Child Protection Officer also liaises with the Director, Ombudspersons and relevant child protection authorities.
- Initiates capacity building efforts for district stakeholders, village and ward Child Protection Committees in the wards we work.

Organizational Child Protection Unit

- In each district of operation, that is Binga and Hwange districts we will designate one representative from the Board, one representative from the Finance and Administration department and one representative from the programmes department to form an organizational Child protection Unit under the management of the Child Protection Officer.
- Care must be taken in establishing such units to balance gender.
- It is mandatory that in dealing with each case of abuse, at least three members be present and make collective decisions in dealing with each case.
- It is the duty of the Child Protection Unit to ensure that children are protected by investigating abuse cases and recommending appropriate action to be taken.
- This will be done by convening a meeting at the shortest possible time probably within 48 hours once a suspected case of abuse is reported and recommending an investigation, instigation officer and their terms.
- The Investigating Officer or team authorised must work within the shortest time possible probably not more than two weeks to gather evidence and compile a report on the alleged or reported abuse.
- The Child Protection Unit will also track progress of investigations they will have authorized through the Child Protection Unit.

- Recommends appropriate internal and external actions after conclusions of investigations.

The Child Protection Ombudspersons

- Ntengwe for Community Development will create formal agreements with the Department of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and the Victim Friendly Unit to become our alternate Child Protection Ombudspersons.
- These are departments' mandated and knowledgeable to deal with child protection issues but work outside of the organization.
- Their main role will be to liaise with the Child Protection Officer about all external and internal reported cases and ensure that these are prosecuted fairly.
- They will also have the right to contact funding partners were they feel that there are internal abuses of children that are not being dealt with.
- They will mainly be responsible for handling externally reported cases especially in liaison with the district and ward level child protection committees.

Procedure for reporting, investigation, sanctions etc.

Reasonable grounds for reporting; the following will be taken for purposes of this policy as reasonable grounds for children, adults and any witnesses in the community to report child abuse cases.

- A disclosure from a child in relation to abuse by an adult or another child

- An account by a person who witnessed the abuse of a child

- Evidence of an injury or behaviour which indicates abuse, and is unlikely to have been caused by any other means

- Evidence of injury or behaviour consistent with abuse but where a statement that appears to be innocent is given

- Consistent indication over time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect or lack of adequate supervision.

- A disclosure by an adult that they were once abused as a child by someone who now has contact with children.

- A parent or guardian has behaved in such a way towards the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm

Who can report child abuse cases?

Anyone from the abused child, witnesses, parents and family members, child protection committee members, teachers and community members.

To whom can one report?

- Cases must be reported to the relevant structures including the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, ward and district child protection committees, and known officials.

- In our case we encourage children, staff, volunteers and community members to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization.

- Ntengwe for Community Development prohibits any retaliation against any staff and community members who, in good faith, has registered a complaint under this procedure.

- There will be a designated Child Protection Units responsible for dealing with child protection issues within the organization.

What will we do?

- Where an allegation has been made that a Ntengwe for Community Development member of staff, student, volunteer or visitor has abused a child, Ntengwe will take the appropriate action to deal with the situation, as outlined in the procedural plan of action for the Child Protection Officer and Child Protection Unit. If the applicable laws of the country require to do so, an immediate report of the alleged abuse will be made to the police or government social services department in this case Social Welfare.
- Ntengwe for Community Development members of staff, students, volunteers, donors or visitors are required to report suspected abuse to either the Child Protection Officer or District Head. In situations where that would be inappropriate the alleged abuse should be reported to the Director.
- The Child Protection Officer will convene a meeting within 48 hours of receiving reports of alleged abuse and take measures to ensure that cases are investigated, documented and a written report of findings completed within 30 days of the allegation. Outside expertise or legal authorities may be involved.
- The Director will be informed of all child abuse allegations within 3 days of the allegation.
- If an investigation leads to the conclusion that abuse has occurred, then the appropriate legal authorities will be notified if they have not previously been involved in the investigation.
- If an Ntengwe for Community Development member of staff, student or volunteer is involved in a finding of abuse, then they will be terminated immediately and subject to criminal prosecution.
- Where no evidence of abuse has been found, the informant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator will be notified.
- The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.
- Ntengwe for Community Development members of staff, students or volunteers who are found violating confidentiality of allegations will receive a written warning.
- Ntengwe for Community Development will work in cooperation with child welfare and legal organizations during the course of an investigation as appropriate.
- Both the victim and perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
- Ntengwe for Community Development will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.
- The alleged perpetrator will be treated without prejudice.
- Ntengwe for Community Development will work in cooperation with other organizations in a case where the child involved requires extra protection.
- The Child Protection Officer will make records of all facts related to the investigation and allegation, and these will be carefully and confidentially filed by the Ntengwe Director.

- Ntengwe for Community Development will designate a point person to deal with the media and the police.

4. Implementation with Partners

The Ntengwe for Community Development Board of Governors retains the oversight role of ensuring that the letter and spirit of this Child Protection Policy is complied with. Management through the Director will spearhead day to day implementation by giving guidance to the Child Protection Officer and the Child Protection Unit. The Child Protection Officer will be responsible for the day to day implementation of the Policy for the benefit of the Board, Staff members, children, district and community stakeholders, consultants and funding partners.

Implementation of the Ntengwe for Community Development Child Protection Policy
This policy will come into force on the day when it will be signed by the Director and a Board Representative. The key guiding actions of implementing the Policy will be:

- Board and staff capacity building and induction sessions on the provisions of the Policy in Binga and Hwange Districts
- Signing of Statement of Commitments by the Board, management, staff and volunteers to abide by the Policy
- Provision of copies of the policy to the Board, Staff, volunteers for their information.
- Continued capacity building on the Child Protection Policy on stakeholders, children, communities, schools and funding partners by management and the Child Protection Committee.
- Gradual translation into Tonga, Nambia and Ndebele of the Policy, constitutional provisions and international statutes that underpin the Child Protection Policy.
- Mainstreaming of the Child Protection Policy into our development programmes and commemorative events spearheaded by management.

Monitoring of the Implementation of the Child Protection Committee

- The Child Protection Unit and Officer will regularly monitor the implementation of the policy
- Focus will be made to track changes in the number of reported cases in communities we would have introduced and created awareness of the Policy
- Project Officers will be requested to include a reporting section on Child Protection issues in their monthly, quarterly, bi-annual and annual reports
- Documented and investigated cases of abuse and reporting procedures will also be utilized to monitor compliance to the policy
- Organizational meetings will also monitor progress in implementing the Child Protection Committee

Review the child protection policy every 2-3 years

- The CPP shall be reviewed at least every 2 years
- Areas to be amended shall be put in writing prior to the dates of the amendment and formal request made to the Board by management
- A stipulated time of bringing in suggested issues shall be given to all partners, employees, children and others.

Done and signed here at Binga on ----------Day of---------- 20----------

Board_____ _____ _____

Name and Surname Signature Designation

Director_____ _____

Name and Surname Signature

Appendix 1: Child Protection Policy Code of Conduct

The Code of Behaviour for Ntengwe for Community Development will apply to any member of the Board, employee, officer, volunteer, intern, researcher, consultant, advisor, funding partner, stakeholders and community members who have direct contact with children. When working with children under the auspices of Ntengwe, these will sign a statement of commitment to abide by the code of conduct and child protection policy. The Code of Conduct therefore includes guidance on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of adults towards children and of children towards children.

Code of Conduct

Ntengwe for Community Development believes strongly in children's rights to survival, protection, participation and development as enshrined in international, regional and national legislation including the constitution of Zimbabwe with its progressive provisions for the rights of children. This code of conduct has been developed in furtherance of the best interests of the child and must be interpreted by all in that spirit.

Appropriate Standards of Behaviour

All parties to which this code applies **should**:

- ✓ Provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual development.
- ✓ Respect and encourage children's voices and views on issues that affect them
- ✓ Promote inclusiveness and involve all children irregardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status.
- ✓ Be very aware of the potential of peer abuse (children abusing other children including bullying)
- ✓ Develop means to protect younger and vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse
- ✓ Develop guidelines to address physical safety issues relative to the environment for instance project sites near roads, water bodies etc)
- ✓ Avoid meeting or assisting children when you are on your own and under circumstances which might be potentially questioned by others.
- ✓ Meet with a child in a central and public location whenever possible.
- ✓ Report immediately situations which occur which may be subject to misinterpretation to the designated Child Protection Officer.
- ✓ Visitors to Ntengwe for Community Development project and programme areas will not be left unsupervised. Ntengwe for Community Development staff, students and short term volunteers can be left unsupervised at the project areas if they have signed the Ntengwe for Community Development Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Ntengwe for Community Development drivers will not take a beneficiary child home without at least one other person being present in the vehicle, unless the child is a family member or custodial parent consents in writing.
- ✓ Adults will always be responsible for their behaviour and cannot blame the child, even if the child 'provokes' or acts in a 'seductive' way.

- ✓ If the code of conduct is broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her job and may be subject to criminal proceedings.

Inappropriate Standards of Behaviour

All parties to which this code applies **<u>should not</u>**:

- ❖ Hit and physically assault a child
- ❖ Use language that may lead to emotional abuse of any children
- ❖ Embarrass, shame, humiliate or degrade a child
- ❖ Discriminate a child on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status.
- ❖ Develop a romantic and sexual relationship with a child
- ❖ Touch a child in an inappropriate way or expose them to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos and literature (A general guideline for touching inappropriately is not to touch children in areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt, but also includes kissing and tickling in an inappropriate way.)
- ❖ Encourage any inappropriate show of love or feelings to an adult by a child
- ❖ Initiate physical contact with children
- ❖ Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.

Appendix 2: Guideline for External Reporters

External reporters who are brought in by the organization to events that have children present have a Duty of Care to ensure that Children are protected from misuse of information and images. In line with this Child Protection Policy External reporters are required to abide by these guidelines to safeguard children including not making identity and location of children public without their prior consent.

General Practice Should Include:

1. Prior to events, were external reporters are hired through Ntengwe for Community Development, the organization must have sought the children's/parents' consent in writing
2. External reporters will be made aware on time of the requirements of the Child Protection Policy and the need to abide by its provisions
3. Recorded images of children should only be made, kept and used where there is a valid reason associated with an activity.
4. Children/parents should be informed as to how and where information and images will be used.
5. Information and images should be taken of children who are appropriately dressed
6. Images and information should be stored with consent attached

Appendix 3: Character Reference Form

Please provide the name, address and contact details of two character references you have known professionally for no less than 2 years excluding your family members.

Referee Name:	Referee Name:
Organization/Department	Organization/Department
Capacity in which you know referee	Capacity in which you know referee
Address	Address
Contact Numbers	Contact Numbers
Email address	Email address

Declaration of Criminal Convictions

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please provide details of all criminal convictions including those considered you have already completely served sentence, and declare any previous investigations or allegations made against you. These will be kept confidential by Ntengwe for Community Development but will be assessed to see if they pose any risk or not in relation to child protection.

Appendix 4: Statement of Commitment to the Ntengwe for Community Development Child Protection Policy

I,_____, have read and understood the standards and procedures outlined in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the provisions contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practices while undertaking contractual obligations associated with Ntengwe for Community Development. I further understand and accept that complying to the Ntengwe for Community Development Child Protection Policy will involve undergoing a Police record checks, signing a Character reference form stating any criminal convictions, declaring any previous investigations or allegations against me with respect to child protections issues and providing two character references.

_____

Full name and Surname

_____

I.D/Passport Number

_____

Job Title/Role

_____

Signature

_____

Date

Ntengwe for Community Development

Case Reporting Form

Part 1: Reporting Person

Name and Surname:

Are you Ntengwe Staff/ Volunteer/ Community Member/ Board Member?
(Please circle relevant one)

Details of any other Organisation involved

Your relationship to the child or young persons or vulnerable adult concerned

Part 2: About the Child:

Name (s)

Male or Female?

Age

Address

Who does the child or young person live with?

Part 3: About Your Concern

How did you come to have a concern: was abuse observed or suspected?
Was an allegation made?

Did a child disclose abuse?

Date, time and place of any incident(s)

Nature of concern/allegation

Observations made by you (e.g. child's emotional state, any physical evidence)

Write down exactly what the child said and what you said: continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Any other relevant information? (e.g. disability? language?)

Were other children involved or aware?

Have you reported to parents, guardian or any other Child Protection Personnel (including designated officer(s) and statutory authorities)?

Person(s) to whom report was made (Designated Child Protection Officer)

Time and date of reporting:

Advice given:

Action taken: