



CHANGE FOR CHILDREN ASSOCIATION (CFCA) Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy

Rationale/Purpose:

CFCA is committed to a human rights-based approach to development, driven by human dignity and social justice. At the core of our mission is the belief that respect for human rights will help lift people out of poverty and injustice by allowing them to assert their dignity, have a voice, and speak out for their rights. These individuals can only become empowered agents of change if they are protected from exploitation, abuse, and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, or emotional.

In our efforts to impact poverty and social justice, CFCA engages with marginalized communities in the Global South. Sexual exploitation and abuse occur in all countries and societies, but the children and adults we serve are particularly vulnerable. CFCA recognizes sexual exploitation and abuse as violations of universally accepted international legal norms and standards. This policy declares CFCA's commitment to protecting those we serve from sexual exploitation and abuse, involving CFCA employees, volunteers, and related personnel. As we recognize the heightened vulnerability of children, this policy also confirms our pledge to protect the welfare of children from sexual exploitation and all forms of abuse, involving CFCA employees, volunteers, and related personnel.

Definitions:

Sexual Exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual Abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a child is considered as sexual abuse.

Child Abuse: According to the World Health Organization, "child abuse" or "maltreatment" constitutes "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".

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after.
- **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. This includes, but is not limited to, conveying to children that they are inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on

children, causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, and the exploitation or corruption of children.

- **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. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in viewing or producing, pornographic materials, involving children in watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Principles:

- **Human Rights-Based Approach to Development**
 - Within a human rights-based approach to development, CFCA's Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy supports and promotes protection from sexual exploitation and abuse as an explicit internationally recognized human right, articulated in international human rights law and agreements.
- **Safe and Supportive Environments**
 - CFCA is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment all CFCA personnel and partner organization personnel. This includes measures to prevent, report, and respond to allegations of child abuse, sexual exploitation, and abuse. All employees and related personnel will be provided with the proper information and training and will be obligated to adhere to the prevention and reporting processes used to enforce this policy.
- **Social Justice and Human Dignity**
 - CFCA is committed to seeking the transformation of unequal power relationships that make individuals and children vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse. Sexual relationships between CFCA or partner organization personnel are strongly discouraged, as they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of CFCA's development work.
 - Any acts of child abuse, sexual exploitation, or abuse by Board Members, staff, volunteers, and related personnel of CFCA and our partner organizations constitutes acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination and/or criminal prosecution.
- **Non-Negotiable Duty**
 - CFCA Board Members, staff, volunteers, and partner organizations have a duty to protect vulnerable adults and children from sexual exploitation and abuse. All CFCA personnel will be held responsible for implementing the mechanisms of protection, as appropriate for their role. This duty is imperative and non-negotiable.

Objectives and Strategies

1. Prevention

- As a condition for working with CFCA, all staff, volunteers, and related personnel are required to sign a written commitment to adhere to our Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy.
- CFCA staff, volunteers, and related personnel are obligated to create and maintain an environment that prevents child abuse, sexual exploitation, and abuse. Supervisors at all levels have the responsibility to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

- Procedures are in place to ensure all staff, volunteers, and related personnel share an understanding and commitment to our Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy. These methods include measures regarding recruitment procedures, incorporating CFCA's standards in relevant codes of conduct, review of management structures, staff and volunteer training, and clear guidelines on how the policy should be enforced.
- All partner organizations will be informed of the Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy and will be expected to enforce the policy to the fullest extent. Failure to do so shall constitute as grounds for CFCA to terminate partnership agreements.
- The role of specific staff positions have been developed to support and ensure effective implementation of strategies to prevent and respond to instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. These strategies are disseminated to all partner organizations.

2. Implementation and Enforcement

- CFCA will respond to all reports of actual or alleged violations of the Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy, regardless of who the allegations are about, who the referrer is, or where the referrer is from.
- Reporting processes are developed to ensure complaints be kept confidential to the extent practicable.
- Reporting procedures will be thoroughly explained to all CFCA personnel and personnel from partner organizations to ensure they are clear on what steps to take should they suspect or witness policy violations. This includes a documented reporting procedure in the local language for partner organizations.
- CFCA will act on the concerns or allegations by initiating a prompt and thorough investigation, including interviewing practices with the accuser and witnesses. Special procedures and checklists will be used to ensure the policy is being enforced to the fullest extent. This process may also include engagement with investigative expertise, as fitting.
- Where complaints are upheld, appropriate disciplinary action will follow. In cases of acts of a criminal nature committed by a CFCA member or partner organization personnel, referral will be made to relevant authorities for appropriate action, including criminal prosecution.
- Appropriate action will be taken to protect reporting persons and victims from retaliation when allegations of child abuse, sexual exploitation, or abuse are made. CFCA will also provide support and assistance to victims, including medical treatment, legal assistance, and psychological support as appropriate.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Through continued monitoring and evaluation of the Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy, CFCA aims to learn from practical case experiences. This information will be used to make policy reviews and changes. Monitoring and evaluation will be done by checking whether the standards from the Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse Policy are being implemented and whether safeguards are working.

4. Accountability

- The CFCA Annual Plan, approved by the Board of Directors each year, will include specific plans on how this policy will be implemented and evaluated in the current year. The CFCA Executive Director is responsible to lead the implementation of this policy, and to report progress annually to the Board.

5. Public Image and Communications

- In an effort to maintain transparency with our supporters and the public, CFCA Board Members and staff will carefully assess what is appropriate in terms of public disclosure in cases of child abuse, sexual exploitation, and abuse within the organization and its activities with partner organizations.

Approved by CFCA Board, February 2019.

Date for Review: February 2022.