

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Version 002



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Foreword by the Chairperson of the Commission

The policy guidelines respect the regulations and legislations with regard to the rights and obligations of employees in Uganda. This policy is to serve as a reference document for Employees of their rights, responsibilities and obligations. They serve as a guide for the Supervisors and Managers in the administration of personnel policies and procedures. And therefore, the contents of this handbook forms part of every employment contract. This policy shall be brought to the attention of every employee before signing the employment contract and, therefore, by signing the contract with Caritas Moroto Diocese an employee agrees to comply with the policies of Caritas Moroto Diocese. Violations of any of these policies will subject the employee(s) to disciplinary action, possibly including termination of their contract. In case of lack of clarity about any particular clause, sentence or word contained in this Policy, the interpretation of the Diocesan Caritas Director, the Human Resource Representative, and the support of the Commission, shall be final. Amendment of these policies or introduction of additional policies are welcome, but can only be put into practice after the approval by Commission of Caritas Moroto. May these policies be used for the good of Caritas Moroto Staff and Operations!

Approval by the commission Chairperson:

Name:

Signature:

Approval Date:

Foreword by the Bishop of Moroto

On behalf of the Diocese and on my own behalf, I wish to express our deep gratitude to all those who have worked hard to review this policy. The contribution of the Diocese to the development of the communities we serve is anchored on a motivated human resource pool supported by clear policy guidelines.

The policy is a guide and tool for efficient and dedicated service. Let it therefore; be used to achieve this purpose.

Signature

Bishop Damiano Guzzetti

Date:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is the responsibility that Caritas Moroto Diocese has to ensure that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations and programmes do no harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults (together referred to as ‘vulnerable people’ under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the organization has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that Caritas Moroto Diocese has for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.

Child protection is a central part of but not separate to safeguarding. It is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or programme work. It also includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse.

There has been increasing recognition of the way in which children, young people and vulnerable adults can be at risk of discrimination, neglect, abuse and exploitation by those who are in positions of trust and power over them, including through programmatic activities.

As a consequence, Caritas Moroto Diocese is committed to increase its efforts to ensure that no harm results from the contact of their employees, volunteers and other stakeholders on target populations or communities. Through their work, Caritas Moroto Diocese employees, employees of partner organizations and volunteers may engage with young people and vulnerable adults either directly or indirectly. Caritas Moroto Diocese recognises it has an obligation to put in place all reasonable safeguarding measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including those with whom we work and those in the communities where Caritas Moroto Diocese work is undertaken.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide clarity to all on how they should engage with children, young people and vulnerable adults when working for, on behalf of, or in partnership with Caritas Moroto Diocese. It is also to help us make sure that employees, volunteers and other stakeholders are protected. It is intended to help Caritas Moroto Diocese have a common understanding of safeguarding issues, develop good practice across the diverse and complex areas in which it operates and thereby increase accountability in this crucial aspect of our work.

1.2. Scope

This policy is mandatory for all Caritas Moroto Diocese employees. For the purposes of this policy, 'employee' is defined as anyone who works for or on behalf of Caritas Moroto Diocese, either in a paid or unpaid capacity. This therefore includes directly employed staff, trustees, contractors, employees and volunteers of sub-contractors, agency workers, consultants, volunteers, interns and all visitors to Caritas Moroto Diocese work programmes and offices.

1.3. Policy Statement

Caritas Moroto Diocese has zero tolerance against abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people. The entity also recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that it has an obligation to put in place reasonable measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people with whom we work and those in the communities in which we live.

Caritas Moroto Diocese works based on the following key principles to protect vulnerable people:

- a) Everyone has an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or having a child, gender reassignment, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- b) The best interests of the vulnerable person are paramount and shall be the primary consideration in our decision making.
- c) Caritas Moroto Diocese will take responsibility to meet obligations regarding its duty of care towards vulnerable people, and act where it is believed that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk or is actually harmed.
- d) Caritas Moroto Diocese will ensure that employees and volunteers are inducted in our safeguarding and child protection procedures as a key part of the recruitment and on boarding process.
- e) Caritas Moroto Diocese recognizes that an element of risk exists even with this policy, and while it may never be able to totally remove it, there is need to do all it can to reduce it or limit its impact.
- f) Caritas Moroto Diocese commits to monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding and child protection policy.
- g) Cultural sensitivity; Caritas Moroto Diocese seeks always to work in ways which are culturally sensitive and respects the diverse nature of the people it works with. Caritas Moroto Diocese recognizes that there are many different ways of thinking and taking care of vulnerable people and making sure they are protected has cultural implications. It is acknowledged that protecting these groups of individuals and being culturally sensitive can be a difficult balancing act, especially given the situation in the Caritas

Moroto Diocese area of work. Caritas Moroto Diocese shall make efforts to enforce this policy while taking precautions not to offset the cultural balance.

I.4. Non-compliance to this policy

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, which may result in immediate termination of employment or contract, withdrawal of volunteer status, and reporting to the police, relevant regulatory authority or other body as stipulated in the Human resource manual.

I.5. Definitions of persons safeguarded under this policy

1.5.1. Child:

Caritas Moroto Diocese regards a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives or in their home country. It is widely recognised that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, social and economic status, developmental stage, and dependence on others.

1.5.2. Vulnerable person/people:

For the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term which covers children, young people and vulnerable adults. Persons with disability shall be considered under the definition of vulnerable persons.

1.5.3. Vulnerable adult:

A person, 36 years and above, who by reason of disability, age, gender, social and economic status, or illness, the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect him or herself against abuse, harm or exploitation.

1.5.4. Youth or young people:

Individuals aged 18 to 30. Caritas Moroto Diocese recognises that this group spans the categories of 'children and 'adults' but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.

2.0 ACTS CONSTITUTING ABUSE UNDER THIS POLICY

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts punishable under the penal code.

2.1. Types of abuse addressed by this policy

2.1.1. Discriminatory abuse:

Abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.

2.1.2. Financial or material abuse:

Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

2.1.3. Neglect:

The persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.

2.1.4. Physical abuse:

Includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

2.1.5. Psychological abuse:

Includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include but are not limited to; not giving a vulnerable person opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

2.1.6. Sexual abuse:

Involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in

sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.

2.1.7. Exploitation:

Exploitation is an umbrella term used to describe the abuse of children, young adults or vulnerable adults by forcing, tricking, coercing or trafficking them into exploitative activities in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

2.1.8. Child Labour:

Child Labour is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It is work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. Child labour may also be a form of child slavery.

3.0 APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

This section sets out Caritas Moroto Diocese's response to safeguarding and child protection. Caritas Moroto Diocese prohibits any of its staff, trustees, contractors, employees and volunteers of sub-contractors, agency workers, consultants, volunteers and interns from engaging in any form of child abuse, maltreatment or poor safeguarding practice.

Caritas Moroto Diocese shall carry out the following strategies in order to prevent, detect and report acts of child abuse, maltreatment and poor safeguarding practices.

3.1. Awareness:

Caritas Moroto Diocese shall ensure that all staff, trustees, contractors, third parties, agency workers, consultants, volunteers and interns are aware of the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them to protect children, youths and vulnerable adults from any form of abuse and exploitation in their private and working lives.

Caritas Moroto Diocese shall ensure that all staff members, trustees, contractors, employees and volunteers of sub-contractors, agency workers, consultants, volunteers and interns sign a written statement on safeguarding and child protection and that they understand and will abide by this policy.

Safeguarding and child protection awareness shall be included in hiring, orientation, staff trainings at headquarters & field offices and for those individuals having direct contact with children, youths and vulnerable adults.

Support and training on safeguarding and child protection will be provided to all employees and volunteers on:

- a) What they should do in the event of a disclosure.
- b) What to do if they have concerns about the welfare of a child, youth, vulnerable adult
- c) How to recognize signs of abuse.
- d) What to do if they have concerns about a Caritas Moroto Diocese employee, volunteer, or employee of a partner organization.
- e) Where to go for advice and support within the organization.
- f) What the processes are for reporting and dealing with safeguarding concerns and incidents.

The safeguarding and child protection processes shall be widely communicated, regularly reviewed and consistently applied. Where allegations are made about an employee, careful consideration must take place about the appropriateness of the person continuing to work with Caritas Moroto Diocese.

3.2. Prevention:

Caritas Moroto Diocese shall ensure through awareness and good practices that acts of abuse are prevented and children, youth and vulnerable adults are safeguarded.

3.2.1. All

All employees, volunteers, consultants, agency staff, sub-contractors, partner organizations and visitors are obliged to follow this policy and maintain an environment that prevents exploitation and abuse and which encourages reporting of breaches of this policy using the appropriate procedures.

All people working with Caritas Moroto Diocese will:

- a) Read, understand and adhere to the Caritas Moroto Diocese safeguarding Policy and child protection policy.
- b) Strive to promote a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse in all work and non-work environments.
- c) Strive to develop relationships with all stakeholders which are based on equality, trust, respect and honesty.
- d) Place the safety and welfare of children, youths and vulnerable adults above all other considerations.
- e) Report any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child, youth or vulnerable person.
- f) Report any concerns they may have about the behaviour of a Caritas Moroto Diocese stakeholder in relation to safeguarding.
- g) In a one-to-one situation with a child, youth or vulnerable adult, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows why the

contact is taking place and why. If possible ensure another adult is in sight and that the child or young person knows another adult is around.

All people working with Caritas Moroto Diocese will not:

- a) Sexually harass, assault or abuse a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- b) Physically harass, assault or abuse a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- c) Emotionally abuse a child, youth or vulnerable adult, such as engaging in behaviour intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- d) Condone, or participate in behaviour which is abusive, discriminatory, illegal, or unsafe.
- e) Develop, encourage or fail to act on relationships with children, youths or vulnerable adults which could in any way be deemed sexual, exploitative or abusive
- f) Act in ways that may be violent, inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- g) Agree with a child to keep a secret which has implications for their safety or the safety of other young people.
- h) Engage in acts of exploitation of a child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- i) Carry out acts defined within this policy as abuse.

3.2.2. Managers

Managers at all levels are responsible for ensuring employees, volunteers, consultants, visitors and partner organizations are aware of the policy and are supported to implement and work in accordance with it, as well as creating a management culture that encourages a focus on safeguarding. They must ensure that they are responsive, acting immediately if they become aware of any safeguarding concerns, and supportive towards employees or volunteers who complain about breaches in this policy.

3.2.3. Caritas Moroto Diocese Commission

The Caritas Moroto Diocese Commission is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy and associated procedures and ensuring that everyone linked with Caritas Moroto Diocese is equipped and supported to meet their responsibilities.

3.2.4. Recruitment and selection:

Safe recruitment and vetting processes must be followed for all volunteers, employees, consultants and other partners. Inquiries on safeguarding and child protection shall be embedded in recruitment processes.

Where an employee, volunteer or partner is engaged in 'regulated activity' (direct work with vulnerable individuals), a criminal background check will be undertaken as part of the recruitment process.

All Caritas Moroto Diocese employees and volunteers must sign and abide by this safeguarding policy.

3.2.5. Data protection

Caritas Moroto Diocese volunteers, employees, consultants and other partners must ensure that personal information is kept confidential unless we have the agreement of the individual and/or their parent/guardian, except where it is necessary to pass this to a specialised child welfare or law enforcement agency in relation to a safeguarding incident.

3.2.6. Social media, success stories and websites

Caritas Moroto Diocese volunteers, employees, consultants and other partners will ensure that the use of media and actual names, images, including photographs and recordings is done with the explicit permission of the individual and/or their parent/guardian. Caritas Moroto Diocese volunteers, employees, consultants and other partners shall:

- a) Use names and images of children, young people or vulnerable adults respectfully and not expose them to further vulnerability (not degrading or showing sexual images of children naked or partially clothed).
- b) Reproduce images and use names of children only where we have the written permission of their parents / guardians using a consent form.
- c) Make clear to vulnerable people and their families that agreement to providing information or images is not a condition of involvement in Caritas Moroto Diocese activities and programmes.
- d) Inform employees, volunteers and partners about the Caritas Moroto Diocese policy in relation to the use of technology and understand that they must not use this technology for the purpose of accessing, producing or distributing any information or violent or sexual images that are harmful to vulnerable people. This includes adult pornography.

3.3. Reporting:

Caritas Moroto Diocese shall ensure that all staff, volunteers and partners are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding allegations of child abuse or exploitation of youths and vulnerable adults.

All employees have an obligation to report violations of these policies. Caritas Moroto Diocese will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal, or retaliation against any employee who makes a report regarding a possible violation of this policy or who provides information or assistance in an investigation.

Staff democratically elect two staff members one male and one female that will act as focal point persons for receiving incidents and concerns. Staff will report allegations to these point persons who will in turn report alleged violations simultaneously to the Program Managers, Director or Commission depending on the persons involved.

It is imperative that children and parents understand their responsibilities to report any concerns they may have regarding the safety of children, youths and vulnerable adults.

Regardless of who is reporting an allegation (staff member, child, parent, etc.), the allegation must be reported directly to a Caritas Moroto Diocese Point Person, who should then provide details about what happened, including the date, location, and the name of the witness and transmit a report to the Program Managers, Director or Commission depending on the persons involved, within twenty-four hours.

Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to external agencies are to follow local and national laws upon submission of a report by the focal persons and Director approval.

Confidential and anonymous reporting.

Staff, volunteers and other partners of Caritas Moroto Diocese must be aware of the whistleblower reporting mechanisms. The whistleblower mechanisms shall also be utilized for confidential and anonymous reporting of acts of abuse.

3.4. Responding to incidents:

Caritas Moroto Diocese Program Managers, Directors or Commission members shall take immediate action to review, investigate and address reports of child abuse and exploitation of youths and vulnerable adults.

3.4.1. Confidentiality

It is essential to maintain the trust of the person reporting possible abuse. Caritas Moroto Diocese staff must protect the gathered information with greatest care. It may be that the person reporting the possible abuse does not want the information shared with others. All information gathered and developed is held in the strictest confidence and will be disclosed only on a need-to-know and helpful basis in order to report, investigate and resolve the matter.

In some cases, Caritas Moroto Diocese may act against the wishes of the reporter in the best interests of the child and other children. This can be a very difficult situation and must be handled with utmost care by Caritas Moroto Diocese. It must be made clear to all concerned that information of this nature cannot be kept wholly confidential. Resolution requires sharing with the appropriate people in a confidential manner.

3.4.2. Investigation and Disposition of an Incident

The Program Managers, Directors or Commission members are to comply with the following procedures once an allegation has been reported and to ensure that confidential, thorough, timely and impartial investigations and resolutions are performed.

These include, but are not limited to:

- a) acting immediately if there is risk to the child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- b) performing an internal investigation (which may include interviews of witnesses and others), collecting factual information, gathering documentation and informing the Director and Commission members or Bishop where applicable,
- c) Determining the facts and whether there is need to report the case to external authorities as required by the local laws., in which case this will be done with the approval of the Director or Commission.
- d) Be mindful that certain acts of abuse are punishable under the law and are required to be reported to external authorities. He/she must ensure that such cases are reported to the local authorities and timely.

A Caritas Moroto Diocese employee who has been brought under investigation by the organization or by official law enforcement authorities for the abuse of a child, youth or vulnerable adult will be temporarily suspended or have no access to children during the course of the investigation. The employee will be informed that allegations have been made against him/her and given an opportunity to respond.

All investigations of breach of this policy shall be done through the disciplinary procedures in the Human resource manual for Commission members, staff, volunteers and interns or Caritas Moroto Diocese.

3.5. Communicating the results of reported cases.

Caritas Moroto Diocese shall give feedback on the findings, recommendations and action taken to resolve reported cases to the affected children, youths or vulnerable adults.

The focal point persons shall use staff meetings, program activities and other avenues to communicate recommendations reached on how to reduce incidents covered under this policy.

The Commission shall be appraised on any ongoing cases related to this policy and their eventual conclusions.