

# **A HANDTO THE DISABLED (H2D) COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION**

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:**



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## 1. Introduction

- **About H2D:** A Hand to the Disabled (H2D) is a Ugandan Community Based Organization empowering persons with disabilities in Mityana through holistic support and inclusion initiatives.

- **Purpose and Scope:** H2D is committed to protecting children and persons with disabilities from abuse, exploitation, and neglect in all our programs and activities.

This policy applies to all H2D staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders.

### - H2D Core Values:

- Inclusion
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Accountability

### - Objectives:

- Safeguard children and persons with disabilities in line with H2D's mission.
- Ensure compliance with Uganda laws (Children Act, Persons with Disabilities Act) and international frameworks (UNCRC, CRPD).
- Promote a culture of safety and respect aligned with H2D values.

### - Definitions:

#### - Child:

- Uganda's Children Act (Cap 59): A person below 18 years.
- UNCRC (Art 1): A human being below the age of 18 years.

#### - Person with disability:

- Uganda's Persons with Disabilities Act (2006): A person with a physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental impairment.
- CRPD (Art 1): Includes persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments.

#### - Abuse:

- Uganda's Children Act: Includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect.
- UNCRC (Art 19): Includes physical, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation.
- Exploitation:
  - CRPD (Art 16): Includes exploitation, violence, abuse of persons with disabilities.

## **2. Legal and Policy Frameworks**

H2D is committed to complying with national and international laws protecting children and persons with disabilities, aligning with our values of Inclusion, Respect, Empowerment, and Accountability.

### **Uganda Laws- Children Act (Cap 59):**

- Protects children from abuse, exploitation, neglect (Sec 3, 5); outlines responsibilities of parents/institutions (Sec 7, 8).

- Defines a child as below 18 years (Sec 2).

- H2D aligns with this Act in safeguarding children per our Accountability value.

### **- Persons with Disabilities Act (2006):**

- Promotes rights, protection, inclusion of persons with disabilities (Sec 3); prohibits discrimination (Sec 6).

- Requires accessibility and participation in society (Sec 11, 13).

- H2D works to empower persons with disabilities per this Act and our Empowerment value.

### **- Other relevant Uganda laws:**

- **Uganda Constitution (1995):** Art 34 (rights of children), Art 35 (rights of persons with disabilities).

- **Uganda Penal Code:** Addresses offenses against children (e.g., defilement, cruelty), persons with disabilities.

### **International Frameworks:**

#### **- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):**

- Protects children's rights to safety, non-discrimination (Art 2, 3, 19); participation in decisions (Art 12).

- Best interests of the child paramount (Art 3).

- H2D adheres to UNCRC per our Respect for children's rights.

#### **- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):**

- Protects rights, dignity of persons with disabilities (Art 1, 3, 16); requires accessibility, inclusion (Art 9, 30).

- H2D aligns with CRPD promoting Inclusion.

#### **- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Rights to security, protection (Art 3, 25).

- H2D upholds these principles serving communities with Accountability.

-H2D ensures policies/actions comply with these frameworks protecting children/persons with disabilities.

## **3. Code of Conduct for H2D Staff and Partners:**

H2D upholds Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment, and Accountability in interactions with children and persons with disabilities.

### **General Principles**

- **Respect dignity:** Treat all children/persons with disabilities with respect (CRPD Art 3, Uganda Persons with Disabilities Act).

- **Non-discrimination:** No discrimination based on disability, age, gender, etc. (Uganda Constitution Art 21, CRPD Art 5).
- **Safety first:** Ensure safety of children/persons with disabilities in all H2D activities (UNCRC Art 19, Children Act Sec 5).
- H2D's Respect and Inclusion values guide these principles.

### **Specific Guidelines for Working with Children and Persons with Disabilities**

- **Interactions:**
  - Use respectful language; avoid demeaning terms.
  - Ensure communication is accessible (CRPD Art 9, Uganda Persons with Disabilities Act Sec 11).
- **Safety measures:**
  - Background checks for staff/volunteers working with children/disabilities.
  - Ensure accessible environments (CRPD Art 9).
- **Reporting concerns:**
  - Report abuse/exploitation suspicions to H2D safeguarding officer or authorities (Children Act Sec 8, CRPD Art 16).
  - H2D's Accountability ensures adherence to these guidelines.

***H2D staff/partners must sign and adhere to this Code of Conduct.***

### **4. Prevention of Abuse and Exploitation**

H2D prioritizes Accountability and Empowerment to prevent abuse/exploitation of children and persons with disabilities.

### **Risk Assessment and Mitigation**

- H2D assesses risks in programs/activities impacting children/persons with disabilities.
- Mitigation strategies include training staff on safeguarding, ensuring accessible environments (CRPD Art 9).
- Aligns with H2D's Inclusion and Accountability.

### **Safeguarding Procedures**

- **Background checks:** H2D conducts checks on staff/volunteers working with children/disabilities (Uganda Children Act Sec 8).
- **Two-adult rule:** At least two adults present in visible, open settings when interacting with children/persons with disabilities; avoid one-on-one interactions in enclosed/private spaces.
- **Training:** Staff trained on child protection, disability inclusion (UNCRC Art 3, CRPD Art 16).
- **Accessible reporting:** Ensure persons with disabilities can report concerns (CRPD Art 9, H2D Empowerment).

### **Reporting Procedures for Concerns or Incidents:**

- Report concerns to H2D safeguarding officer or authorities (Uganda Police, probation).

- Follow Uganda Children Act (Sec 8) and CRPD (Art 16) reporting guidelines.
- H2D ensures Accountability in responses.
- Support survivors per Respect for dignity (CRPD Art 16, Uganda laws).

***H2D reviews safeguarding procedures regularly.***

## **5. Response and Support**

H2D ensures Respect, Empowerment, and Accountability in responding to concerns/incidents affecting children and persons with disabilities.

### **Incident Response**

- Immediate action: Ensure safety of child/person with disability; report to authorities if needed (Uganda Children Act Sec 8, CRPD Art 16).
- Internal reporting: Inform H2D safeguarding officer; document incident in H2D Case Book.

### **Support and Referral**

- Provide support to survivors (counseling, medical, legal aid) per Empowerment.
- Use H2D Referral Form for referrals to services like Uganda Probation, health centers (CRPD Art 16, Uganda laws).
- **If needed, involve stakeholders like:**
  - Police (Uganda Police Child/Family Protection Unit).
  - Local Council leaders.
  - 116 (Uganda Child Helpline) for child protection concerns.
- H2D respects survivor wishes/confidentiality per Respect.

### **Follow-up**

- H2D monitors case progress; ensures survivor access to services.
- Reviews lead to policy/program adjustments per Accountability.
- Document follow-ups in H2D Case Book.

H2D supports survivors, ensures justice, and prevents recurrence.

## **6. Training and Awareness**

H2D promotes Inclusion, Empowerment, and Accountability through training and awareness on child protection and disability inclusion.

### **Training for Staff and Partners**

#### **- Mandatory training:**

#### **H2D trains staff/partners on:**

- Child protection (Uganda Children Act, UNCRC Art 3).
- Disability inclusion (CRPD Art 8, Uganda Persons with Disabilities Act).
- Covers H2D policies, reporting procedures, two-adult rule, safeguarding.
- Aligns with H2D Accountability and Empowerment.

**Awareness-Raising for Communities**

- H2D conducts community sessions on:
  - Rights of children/persons with disabilities (CRPD, Uganda Constitution).
  - Reporting abuse/exploitation (Uganda laws, 116 Child Helpline).
- Promotes Inclusion and Respect for all.
- Uses accessible formats per CRPD Art 9.

***H2D builds a culture of safeguarding and inclusion.***

**7. Monitoring and Review**

H2D ensures Accountability through regular monitoring and review of safeguarding policies.

**Policy Review Schedule**

- H2D reviews this policy annually or when laws/frameworks change.
- Aligns with H2D's Accountability value.

**Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness**

- **Safeguarding officer:** Oversees compliance, reports to H2D management.
- **Checks:** Review Case Book, referrals, training records, incident responses.
- **Adaptations:** Update policy per reviews, CRPD, Uganda law changes.

***H2D improves safeguarding per Accountability and Empowerment.***

**8. Annexes**

H2D's safeguarding policy references below annexes for implementation.

**Annex A:****Relevant Laws/Frameworks Extracts- Uganda laws:**

- Children Act (Cap 59).
- Persons with Disabilities Act.
- Constitution (Art 21, 35).
- **International:**
  - CRPD (Art 3, 9, 16).
  - UNCRC Art 3, 19.

**Annex B:**

- Reporting Forms- H2D Incident Reporting Form (for Case Book).
- H2D Referral Form for services.

**Annex C:**

Code of Conduct Template- H2D Staff/Partner Code of Conduct (aligned with H2D Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment, Accountability).

**H2D updates annexes per policy reviews.**