

Safeguarding Policy



AEI

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“Evangelizing the Cities of Africa through Word and Deed in
partnership with the Church.”

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

African Enterprise International (AEI) is a parachurch organization registered as a non-governmental charity organization in the UK. Our mission is ‘to evangelize the cities of Africa through *Word and Deed* in partnership with the Church.’ AEI is committed to the holistic transformation of communities through gospel proclamation and social interventions.

African Enterprise International oversees word and deed programs in member offices of the African Enterprise partnership. The African Enterprise partnership is comprised of AEI teams based in various countries, i.e., South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as support offices in the USA, Canada, UK, Europe, and Australia.

Some of the activities run by member offices of the African Enterprise partnership include, but are not limited to;

- Evangelism outreaches
- Leadership development programs
- Youth empowerment programs
- Vocational skills programs
- Literacy projects
- Peace and reconciliation programs
- Primary healthcare and medical camps
- Trauma healing and disaster response projects, among others

African Enterprise International has organized and run well-structured collaborative efforts in evangelizing the cities through a unique, stratified evangelism model. This has been in collaboration with key players such as churches, parachurch organizations, NGOs, governments, families, and individual believers among many entities.

AEI Vision

Transformed lives in Christ through an empowered church.

AEI Mission:

Evangelizing the Cities of Africa through Word and Deed in partnership with the Church.

AEI Core Values:

Authority of the scripture, Commitment, Excellence, Integrity, and Unity.

1.1 PRINCIPLES

This Safeguarding Policy is based on Keeping Children Safe in tandem with International Safeguarding Standards; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and its optional protocols); the UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and all child-related UN conventions; the national child protection and vulnerable adults legislation of Kenya (where the AEI office is domiciled), and international good humanitarian practice.

These principles are derived from the Constitution of Kenya 2010 Bill of Rights, Children Act 2022, Anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) laws, international protocols and conventions cited above, and the Holy Bible to which we subscribe.

- All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection from harm.
- Everybody has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
- AEI works with partners, churches, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)”, to help them meet all safeguarding expectations.

- Our partners and members have a duty of caring for children and/or vulnerable adults with whom they work, are in contact with, or are affected by their work and operations.
- AEI's safeguarding actions are always in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult, which is paramount.

1.2 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Safeguarding: Safeguarding is the responsibility organizations have to ensure that their staff, operations, and programs do not harm children and vulnerable adults, that is, that they do not expose children and vulnerable adults to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about vulnerable adults and children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities or handled appropriately.

Child: Any person below the age of 18, regardless of national laws or cultural practices which may stipulate a younger age.

Vulnerable Adult/Adult at risk: Any person aged 18 or over, and if:

- (i) The adult has particular care, support, or special needs that makes them subject to the abuse of others through mistreatment, neglect, or harm, particularly by another person who holds a position of trust (e.g., they may be in custody or secure accommodation, or she is an expectant or nursing mother); and/or
- (ii) The adult is dependent/reliant on others for the provision of basic services (not limited to e.g. safety, shelter, water, food), because of their context, such as:
 - in a refugee camp or a recipient of an NGO relief distribution, and vulnerable to exploitation or abuse as a result of their status or their lack of power and control; and/or
 - the adult is in an unfamiliar country and location

- (iii) The adult is in a relationship (work or social) or in contact with another adult who seeks to misuse their position of authority or trust to control, coerce, manipulate, or dominate them.

‘Do no harm’ refers to organizations’ responsibility to ‘do no harm’ and avoid all harm they may be doing inadvertently as a result of inappropriate programming.

1.3 DEFINITIONS OF HARM

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult, or child. It may involve (among other things) hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning, and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, caressing. It may also include involving children in looking at or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities, and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual exploitation: a form of sexual abuse that involves children or vulnerable adults being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, vulnerable adults, or any beneficiary, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim’s options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual. Sexual exploitation manifests in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional, or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighborhoods. It may also involve opportunistic or organized networks of perpetrators

who profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men or women.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that tends to create a hostile or offensive work environment. While such conduct is often the harassment of women by men, many laws around the world which prohibit sexual harassment, recognize that both men and women may be harassers or victims of sexual harassment

Neglect and negligent treatment: allowing for context, resources, and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refer to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter, and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy because of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill-treatment of a disabled child.

Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on mental wellbeing and mental health. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyberbullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting and abandonment treatment.

Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child or a vulnerable adult in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes but is not limited to, forced labor.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all governors, staff, and associates, including temporary staff and those who relate to the organization in different functions.

Staff include:

- AEI staff, national and international
- AEI volunteers and interns

Associates include:

- AEI contractors, e.g., consultants
- AEI Board Members
- AEI partners
- AEI Guests and Visitors

2.1 PREVENTION

AEI will safeguard children and vulnerable adults at all times by ensuring;

(a) Risk assessment/risk mitigation

AEI regularly conducts risk assessments of all operations, programs, and project activities. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, mitigating the risk to children and vulnerable adults, and incorporated into the design, delivery, and evaluation of programs, operations, and activities which involve or impact upon children and vulnerable adults. All staff are trained in these risk assessment and mitigation strategies

(i) Safe recruitment

AEI ensures that it applies the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies across the organization. Candidates are checked for their suitability for working with children and vulnerable adults and their understanding of safeguarding.

Protection checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), form an important part of our recruitment policy and cover all those representatives that we have an employment relationship with. If police checks are impossible, other checks are put into practice and noted. Checking evidence of identity

and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases. AEI requires a pastoral reference as part of this check.

(ii) Behavior protocols/code of conduct

AEI employees and associates are required to read and understand the AEI code of conduct and sign a declaration that they will adhere to the requirements and guidelines therein before they engage in AEI operations/assignments. Additionally, AEI personnel will be required to annually sign the Safeguarding Code of Conduct commitment (see Annex 1).

(iii) Education/training

All AEI staff and associates receive safeguarding training to help them understand why it is necessary to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults and to be fully aware of the procedure for reporting concerns.

Staff receive an induction on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults at the onset of their engagement with the organization. Staff with responsibilities relating to safeguarding are provided with more in-depth training within six (6) months of their engagement.

Associates, service providers, and members involved in community work are briefed on safeguarding and their responsibilities under the policy upon engagement with the organization.

Children, vulnerable adults, and their families are informed about AEI's commitment to safeguarding.

All staff, vulnerable adults, children, and their families are made aware of the designated Safeguarding Officer (SO) or Safeguarding Focal

Point, who is responsible for receiving reports of concerns and advising on assessing and mitigating risk in line with AEI policy and procedures.

(iv) Safe program design

The AEI programming observes the organization's safeguarding policy

(v) Communications – use of images and children's information

In our use of information and visual images, both photographic stills and videos, AEI's overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in the portrayal of children, vulnerable adults, and communities. The communications guidelines are clearly stipulated and adhered to. Consent shall be sought before any pictures are taken and used.

(vi) Social media (if applicable)

AEI protects children and all vulnerable persons from negative exposure and exploitative use in social media.

(vii) Responsibilities

The policy has been approved by the AEI Board and Senior Management.

(viii) Response to cases infringing on children and vulnerable groups' safety shall be within 24 hours.

2.2 PARTNERS

Agreements with partners will include a statement that partners who do not have a safeguarding policy will either abide by AEI's policy or develop their own as part of the procedure for partnership.

2.3 REPORTING/RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

AEI will receive disclosures from children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk with sensitivity and will strive not to re-traumatize them while handling the complaints. A document to manage and investigate safeguarding complaints will be created to

provide guidance and ensure appropriate action is taken.

Guidelines on handling complaints include the following:

- Listen to and accept what the child, vulnerable adult, or adult at risk says, but do not press for information.
- Let the child or vulnerable adult or adult at risk know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Do not investigate and do not inform, question, or confront the alleged abuser.
- Take the alleged abuse seriously.
- Record carefully what you have heard on the reporting form or register, which shall be secured and kept in a safe place.
- Share this with the Safeguarding Protection Officer for action.
- The Safeguarding Protection Officer will conduct an investigation objectively in collaboration with local leadership and administration where necessary and cascade the matter to relevant authorities for action.
- Follow-up shall be made on the reported issues, and a report will be made.

Any report will be treated seriously and with confidentiality. The priority will always be the safety and best interests of the beneficiary.

Identifying information about children or vulnerable adults will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Any staff who raises concerns of serious malpractice will be protected as far as possible from victimization or any other detrimental treatment. Communities and beneficiaries will be trained on the challenges of malicious allegations and shall be encouraged to share all allegations of malpractice in good faith. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offense and will be investigated.

The subject of the complaint (alleged perpetrator) and all witnesses shall cooperate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality will be protected, and information that could identify them will be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis only.

2.4 AWARENESS CREATION ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, VULNERABLE ADULTS, AND ADULTS AT RISK

AEI respects and values space for children and vulnerable groups and will continue to encourage staff and members to embrace an environment that is friendly to these groups in their engagements.

AEI will create awareness of Safeguarding children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk to its staff, members, and service providers through regular campaigns and training. Members and AEI affiliates will display posters with clear communication on safeguarding in common areas like offices, halls, and places of worship and share information championing children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk matters on available social media platforms.

2.5 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Safeguarding is incorporated into the organization’s risk register and quarterly and annual reporting processes. Senior management and the Board will regularly review the risk register and organization reports to ensure that safeguarding measures are in place and effective.

This policy will be reviewed at a minimum every three (3) years or when it is deemed necessary that additional issues need to be identified and addressed through this policy.

ANNEX A

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

I,..... , acknowledge that I have read, understood the AEI Safeguarding Policy, and agree that in the course of my association with AEI, I must:

- treat children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk with respect regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- not use language or behavior towards children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate
- not engage with children under the age of 18, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult of sound mind is present when working in the proximity of children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk
- not invite unaccompanied children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- not sleep close to unsupervised children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present, if possible
- use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras, or social media appropriately, and never exploit or harass children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk or access exploitation material through any medium

- not hire children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk for domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age, developmental stage, security, or status of their mental health which places them at significant risk of injury
- comply with all relevant local legislation, including labor laws in relation to children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk
- immediately report concerns or allegations of children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk of exploitation, abuse, and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offense, which occurred before or occurs during my association with AEI that relate to exploitation and/or abuse of children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk.

When photographing or filming children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk or using their images for work-related purposes, I must:

- assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk.
- obtain informed consent from the parent, guardian, or caretaker before photographing or filming children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk.
- explain to the parent, guardian, or caretaker how the photograph or film will be used.
- ensure photographs, films, videos, and DVDs present children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the fact
- ensure file labels, metadata or text descriptions do not reveal identifying

information about children, vulnerable adults, and adults at risk when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person associated with AEI, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviors that could be construed as child exploitation and abuse.

Signed:

Name: _____ Date: _____ Sign _____

Supervisor: _____ Date: _____ Sign _____

