



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (SARD-Net)



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Forward

Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development Network (SARD-Net) takes the view that any form of violence against children is unacceptable. Whatever the type of violence used - physical, sexual, and psychological or violence due to negligence – only a clear and consistent policy framework can prevent and fight against such forms of abuse. In all of our projects and programmes, we are committed to ensuring that each child enjoys the benefit of a protective environment in which their rights are respected. This is why we update our rules relating to children's rights on a regular basis, integrating the highest requirements according to international standards and current best practices. It is with this in mind that we have written the «Child Safeguarding Policy» which we wish to see applied to all of our organization's activities.

This document is the outcome of a long period of consultations with relevant groups. Collaborators at the head office and fieldstaff, child protection specialists and partners from government and civil society have all played a role in developing this Child Safeguarding Policy. Dealing with the prevention of abuse and how to respond to suspected abuse, this policy aims to act as a guide to managing day-to-day activities with children. Numerous references relating to the area of child

protection and support tools complement the guide. Therefore, particular attention is given, for example, to hiring new staff, inclusion of social media and new reporting and communication tools. An annual plan of action reflecting safeguarding measures within the staff ensures that the system is implemented properly.

We are aware that the risk of harming children's integrity is very real and this is why we are committed to widely promoting our Child Safeguarding Policy, not only internally but also with partner organizations that represent children and with whom we operate. In case of abuse or suspected abuse, our fundamental principle calls for an immediate and professional response that respects the legislation in force. The current Child Safeguarding Policy contains a new code of conduct to be signed by all SARD-Net collaborators (employees, temporary employees or volunteers). We firmly believe that the systematic use of this Policy is the best way to ensure that all children receive the necessary protection to which they are entitled.



Fr. Kabonghe James

Chairperson, Board of Directors

Preface

SARD-Net considers child abuse unacceptable in all circumstances and takes its duty of care seriously and will aim always to provide the safest possible programs and environments for children. However, achieving this is not a sole responsibility but a collective response from each and every one including organizational staffs that have direct and indirect contact with the children.

SARD-Net believes that child protection is crucial to ensuring that children under 18 years of age have the rights, confidence and environment in which they can make choices, express their views and communicate effectively with other children and adults. Children cannot become empowered change agents to improve their lives and that of their families and communities if they are not safeguarded from abuse, discrimination and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

Safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm and neglect is every one's responsibility. In all matters concerning child protection, the welfare and protection of the young person is paramount.

This child Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour aims to protect young people, staff and significant others from abuse.

1.2 Background to SARD-Net

Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development Network (SARD-Net) is a national network organization of Ugandan graduates from Baraka Agricultural College (BAC) in Kenya with Certificates or Diplomas in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development and like-minded people who believe in Sustainable Agriculture as a strategy for enhancing the livelihoods of rural households in Uganda. Many of the graduates have upgraded to degrees and Masters Level now. Over 150 Ugandan graduates and other people are members of the network and most of them are working with rural communities in all the major four (4) regions (Northern, Eastern, Central, and Western regions) of Uganda.

SARD-Net exists in order to develop capacities and capabilities of the net-work members and target rural communities to promote sustainable agriculture as strategy for rural development and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods of rural households and their communities.

SARD-Net promotes sustainable agriculture – and sustainable agriculture is a system of farming based on a process that strives to meet the needs – necessary for an integrated, happy life – of those depending on the farm by developing the available human, physical, financial and natural resources.

The sustainable agriculture process ensures focus on the economic, social, cultural, environmental, political and institutional factors required to achieve balanced, sustainable livelihoods for present and future generations. It also emphasizes the cross cutting issues affecting the farm family and community.

Therefore, sustainable agriculture aims at improving the livelihood of the family depending on the farm through approaches and processes that ensure focus is on the four pillars on which it is founded - economic, environmental, social-cultural, and political-institutional”.

SARD-Net is committed to upholding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which clearly states that children have

the right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting SARD-Net's commitment to protect children.

Vision

.....'Rural communities in Uganda where people live with dignity and in harmony with each other, their environment and God'

Mission statement

To develop capacities and capabilities of SARD-Net members and target rural communities in partnership with all people of good will so as to be effective and efficient agents in the promotion of sustainable agriculture in Uganda.

Values

Truth, Freedom, Justice, Forgiveness and Love.

1.3 Purpose of the policy

The health, safety and welfare of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our setting. Children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, background or disability. The aim of the policy and procedures is to regulate how we work as an organization so that the children with whom we come into contact (either

directly or indirectly) are safeguarded and have their wellbeing promoted, and that our actions, while implementing programmes or activities, do not cause any harm to children.

SARD-Net operates in diverse settings; it is likely that there may be circumstances which are not covered under the application of the policy and procedures. In such situations, the focal person should be conducted for further advise on the matter of concern.

1.4 Definition of Child Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. It also means protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development, and ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/>).

“Child Safeguarding is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, are not exposed to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities “(Keeping Children

Safe Coalition 3 – www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk). This is all about preventing harm to the children and responding to abuse whenever they occur. In this regard SARD-Net takes responsibility to ensure that measures are put in place to prevent and respond to different forms of abuse against children resulting from direct or indirect contact with the children.

Safeguarding is just not about upholding the rights of children to protection (as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) – but a wider care for children and concerned with harm and wellbeing.

1.5 Principles underpinning the Child Safeguarding Policy

Our Safeguarding Policy is based upon many principles and beliefs, including:

1.All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of their gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background.

2.All actions regarding child safeguarding must be taken in the best interest of children. This includes an understanding that in all our programmes and activities we must ensure that we respect children's rights and do not cause harm.

3. Plans and actions should be based on a clear assessment of the child's continuing developmental needs, their progress and any difficulties the child may be experiencing as well as their wishes. Plans should be timely and appropriate for the child's capacity, age and stage of development.

4. The welfare of the child should be kept sharply in focus in all work with the child and family. The child should be spoken and listened to, and their wishes and feelings ascertained, considered (having regard to their age and understanding) and recorded when making decisions about the provision of services.

5. Everybody has a responsibility for safeguarding. This policy is mandatory for all those who work for or on behalf of SARD-Net, including staff, volunteers and partners. Everyone should actively participate to carry out their responsibilities towards safeguarding children.

6. We work in a transparent and open way where child safeguarding is made a priority, recognising that situations of abuse and harm are able to flourish when staff, volunteers, partners, children, families and community members do not feel able to raise their concerns.

7. All allegations regarding the safety and protection of a child will be taken seriously. If deemed necessary, appropriate steps will be taken to protect the child and take action against the alleged perpetrator. This may include referrals to law enforcement and child protection agencies. In relation to

allegations against staff, volunteers and partners, action may also include the suspension or termination of engagement or any type of cooperation.

8. We will work with other organizations, agencies (state departments and line ministries with a mandate to protect children) and groups as necessary and appropriate.

9. We work within the framework of international, regional, national laws and policies regarding safeguarding children such as UN convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), Children's Act (2016 Amended), OVC policy 2004 among others.

10. We maintain confidentiality and will not unearth (disclose) details of persons involved in promoting the protection of the children. We may only disclose the details of persons where a criminal offense is committed and on request as required by the laws of Uganda.

11. We create awareness and influence others on the importance of safeguarding children, using our policy and procedures. We will share our policy and procedures with others, and be open to feedback regarding its application and relevance.

2. Preventative action: Putting the policy into action

This section of the Policy identifies specific steps and concepts which translate the vision of safeguarding children into action.

Child safeguarding covers the whole organisation and is not just limited to programmes and projects or Human Resources. The concept of safeguarding - and reducing risk - should be embedded in everything that we do, from recruiting a staff member or volunteer, to selecting a partner, through to running an activity and designing and implementing a programme or other institutional activity.

The child safeguard is not only focused on adults who are presumed to be the perpetrators of child abuse. But it should be noted that children can abuse their fellow children for instance a child with more power mistreating a child from less privileged background, an older child mistreating the young one.

In response to the above, the best interest of the child needs to be given priority while providing an intervention on how to support the abused child and what response is required for the abusive child.

Risk assessment will always be conducted and reviewed not only when an issue or concern has been raised or in an event where an activity has been conducted.

2.1 Human Resources

a. All Adults: This section sets out the specific obligations and responsibilities for all adults working with/for SARD-Net, whether paid or unpaid or full or part time (including Board Members, National Management Committee, Cell member, SARD – Net members, partners, staff, interns, volunteers, contractors and consultants).

- The Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all those working with or on behalf of SARD- Net. By agreeing to work with/for the organisation, it is implied that the terms and conditions of the Safeguarding Policy have been accepted as a condition of involvement.
- All staff (including consultants and volunteers) is required to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct as a condition of their involvement with SARD-Net. This sets out specific expectations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

- The policy obliges those in a governing capacity as Members of the Board and National Management Committee (NMC) to sign and abide by the Child Safeguard policy.
- All occasional volunteers and visitors are required to sign and abide by the Child Safeguard policy for as a condition of their involvement with (SARD-Net).
- SARD-Net will carry out orientation or training of the staff and key stakeholders on the policy regarding responsibilities and duty of care. All persons concerned are free to seek clarification or advice on what is expected out of them as far as the responsibilities are concerned.
- Contravening the Child Safeguarding Policy by occasional volunteers and visitors may lead to suspension and termination of any type of engagement. This will be determined on a case by case basis, ensuring that applicable employment conditions and legislation are observed and with regard for the privacy and confidentiality of those concerned while any internal investigation is carried out. In addition, after a thorough consideration of the facts, we will decide whether the case needs to be reported to law enforcement authorities in full conformity with the law.

- The Child Safeguarding Policy focuses on contact with children taking place during work under the responsibility of the organisation. Nevertheless, conduct outside the work environment of those associated with SARD-Net may also contravene the principles and values of the Child Safeguarding Policy. If such issues arise, these will be carefully considered and any decisions made will place utmost importance on the best interest of the child and other standing laws.

b. Education, Advice & Support

This section sets out the efforts that will be undertaken to support the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.

- Staff and volunteers must be given the opportunity for regular updates on safeguarding children – either formally, such as through training or supervision, or more informally, for example through discussion at staff meetings.

- The Child Safeguarding Focal Point based at the secretariat or programme area within the operation of SARD-Net is the primary source of advice and support in relation to child safeguarding concerns and the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy. The support sought or the advice must be

taken seriously but rather not a sign of incapacity or lack of knowledge.

- Within their probationary period set out in the human resource policy section 2.7.1 of SARD – Net of 12 months for long term contractual employment and 6 months for short term employment, and no longer than three (3) months after appointment, all staff must be given guidance as to the Child Safeguarding Policy, and their responsibilities towards safeguarding children. Standing volunteers should also be included in such trainings.

- Based upon the nature of the work being undertaken, the role of the staff and their background and experience, additional specialist training regarding child wellbeing, protection and safety should be provided.

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) should provide support to the staff and volunteers in providing protection and safeguarding the welfare of the children with whom SARD – Net comes into contact either directly or indirectly.

- Efforts must be made by the management of SARD-Net to keep records in HR files for all training/guidance meetings

conducted – with the date and list of attendees on the Child Safeguarding Policy.

c. Awareness Raising

This section sets out mechanisms for awareness raising regarding the Child Safeguarding Policy:

- SARD – Net will create awareness among the Staff and volunteers, as well as partners, communities, families, children and other stakeholders and all those working with/for SARD-Net on the Child Safeguarding Policy, and how to report a concern.
- SARD-Net will ensure a possibility of simplifying the policy that is easily understood by the children. Doing this must be in consultation and participation of children to develop child friendly version policy.
- Where possible a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy should be translated and made available in local languages. This could be provided in a variety of suitable formats that includes posters or booklets.

d. Safer Recruitment

This section focuses on how those working with/for SARD-Net are selected (staff and volunteers). People who wish to abuse children usually target to work with organizations working for/with children. Putting stringent recruitment procedures will enable SARD-Net to minimize the possibility of recruiting abusers of children.

- Safer recruitment procedures will include pre-selection, selection and post-selection actions to ensure that there are as many safeguards as possible in place.
- Efforts will be made to ensure thorough reference and background checks and police checks for criminal offense against children before giving appointment letter to newly recruited staff. All staff must be oriented/trained and guided on child safeguarding policy as a measure to guard against committing child abuse.

e. Child Safeguarding Focal Point

This section sets out the obligation for SARD-Net to recruit/nominate someone to act as Child Safeguarding Focal Point.

The Child Safeguarding Focal Point person is a contact individual, his/her role is to advise, support and assist staff in the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

In real situation the role of the Focal Point should be assigned to someone with child protection/safeguarding knowledge. However, the role can be given to anyone who is committed and has the respect of the team and values children.

The role of child safeguarding does not lie on the focal point person for the child safeguarding policy but rests with everyone. At national level the responsibility lies with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to ensure that it is implemented.

f. Partners

This section lays out ways in which to work with different partners to promote the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

- In an effort to select a partner to work with, consideration will be given to the experience of the partner to work with children including whether they have child safeguarding policy or what they may call child protection policy.

In all partnership relations, strong attention must be given to issues related to child safeguarding. As good practice, specific reference to child safeguarding measures should be included in partnership agreements and contracts.

- Working with partners provide absolute opportunity to raise awareness on the need for institutional policies on child safeguarding. Therefore, all partners should be given training, guidance and support on the SARD-Net Safeguarding Policy, emphasizing the responsibilities that partners have for safeguarding children.

- SARD-Net will exert more control over the terms of the contract with partners if she is the lead partner as far as consortium is concerned. Where we are not the lead partner, then attempts should be made to include safeguarding within the agreement. In either case, partners should be given a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy and guidance provided on the contents.

- If a concern is raised about the partnership in relation to safeguarding, appropriate decision will be made by SARD-Net either to terminate or report the concern to the relevant

authorities. It is not that if a concern is raised, immediately the contract will be terminated. In such scenario the best interest of the child will be key in deciding the fate of the action taken by SARD-Net.

g. Occasional volunteers and visitors

This section covers the occasional visitors who come to support SARD-Net in implementing activities and programmes.

- Official visitors may visit a project with the express permission of SARD-Net. Unofficial may include parents, farmers among others.
- All visitors must be taken through and made to understand the Child Safeguarding Policy.
- It is the duty of the staff member to make sure that occasional visitors and volunteers are properly briefed and supervised throughout the activity (ties).

Guidelines for persons visiting projects, (*Persons visiting should refrain from doing the following*):

- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour children to the exclusion of others.
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.

- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.

2.2 Media and Communication

a. Media Materials

This section puts down guidelines that must be followed by the staff, volunteers and partners working with SARD-Net. In line with the above, there is a need to promote ethical involvement of the media in safeguarding children through ensuring adherence to the set guidelines set by the safeguarding policy.

Ethical Rules regarding the use of images/interviewing a child that must be observed, by SARD-Net.

1. Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate the pain of traumatic events.

2. Not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of their sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.

3. No staging: do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.

4. Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking to a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.

5. Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually only ensured if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.

6. Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make it certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer.

- In film, video and radio interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story.
 - Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.
7. Make sure that the safety of the child will not be compromised if one disseminates images of his or her home, community or environment.
 8. Be accompanied by an employee of SARD-Net while doing a report (video, photo, etc.).
 9. Ensure that the child does not pose in any inappropriate manner (sexual connotations etc.).
 10. Do not take or publish photos of children who are completely naked or dressed inappropriately. Images of children which are exploitative or offensive must not be used.
 11. Taking pictures or videos is reserved for strictly professional use. Staff, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to 'like' and 'share' photographs published on official SARD – Net’s websites and social media sites (such as Facebook).

b. Online Protection and Safety

The open accessibility to internet has made children become passive recipients of inappropriate information, contacts and conducts including: - pornographic images and harmful / violent or abusive sexual contents, which exposes children to risks of self-harm, abusive sexual acts, sexual bullying, commercial sex, child pornography or internet addiction.

To protect children from the bad effects of above mentioned on-line child abuse and exploitation SARD-Net puts down the following guidelines to be followed by the staff, partners, and volunteers in order to prevent the vice.

- No staff, volunteer, partner working with SARD-Net shall be involved in the Production, viewing and sharing online of naked pictures or videos showing children in sexual poses.

It is the responsibility of every staff/volunteer to report producers, transmitters & recipients to Police or Child helpline on 116 toll free or National Information Technology Authority (NITA) on www.report.nita.go.ug/ug.

- In situations where offensive material or unsolicited messages/chats are received, these must be passed on to the

Child Safeguarding Focal Point who must report to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to improve internet safety.

- Filters and blocking software should be installed to ensure that unsuitable/offensive sites cannot be downloaded. In general sites which promote the abuse of children or contain images and information which are harmful to children should be blocked.
- Staff and standing volunteers must also report to their line manager if any offensive material is received or accidentally downloaded.

c. Information, Communication & Technology (IT)

- While the privacy of staff is respected, this is not guaranteed. Additionally, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may exceptionally grant access to private files. This may be, for example, if there was a suspicion that IT equipment had been used to access child pornography online, in violation of the Code of Conduct.
- The use of computer and technology resources for private purposes is allowed if this does not prevent employees from exercising their professional activities, and that it is not prejudicial to the reputation and image of SARD-Net.

- Any voluntary non-professional access to websites detrimental to the reputation of SARD-Net (and in violation of the Child Safeguarding Policy) is strictly forbidden and can justify a dismissal with immediate effect. Any unintended access to harmful data should be immediately reported to line managers to avoid any misunderstanding.

2.3 Programme Design & Implementation

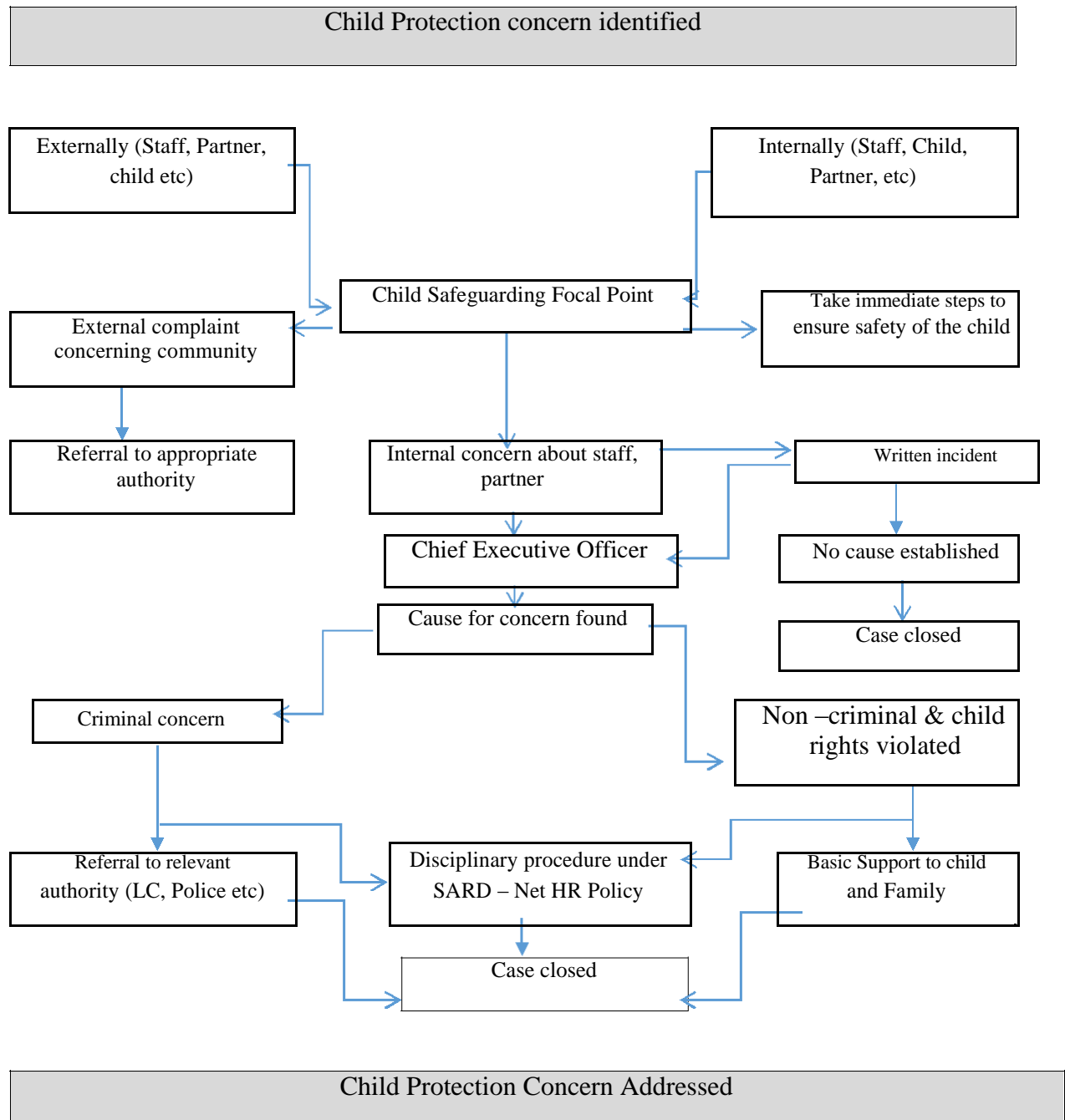
All activities and programmes of SARD-Net will consider safeguarding at all times. The following are some of the guidelines to ensure that child safeguard is across all sections and sectors of the organisation.

- In an event that the risk of executing an activity cannot be dealt with completely, the planned activity must be completely stopped.
- Safeguarding must be considered at every stage, from project/programme design and must be reviewed regularly as part of the monitoring of the project's implementation.
- A written permission should be sought from the children and their parents/guardians before staff/volunteers carrying out activities involving children.
- All staff and volunteers must be supervised regularly by their supervisors in carrying out activities of the organisation. Opportunity should be granted to the staff and volunteers to talk about child safeguarding during meetings.

- In carrying all activities that involve children whether residential or non – residential, risk assessment should be conducted to ensure that such kind of risks are addressed and eliminated.

3. Responsive Action

Flow chart for raising and responding to child protection concern



Within our organization (SARD – Net), what risks are there for children to be abused? By who? When?

- Parents entrusting their children with a maid or a relative. In this process a child can end up in the hands of an abuser.
- Children visiting SARD-Net Learning Centres are at a risk of being abused by SARD – Net staff or students when trainings are running.
- SARD-Net staff abusing their own children e.g. sending a child to the garden instead of going to school, Sexual abuse, etc.
- As SARD-Net grows, staff will grow in numbers, projects spreading countrywide, staff may be required to move up-country leaving the children behind and they may be at a risk of being sexually and physically abused by own parents, staff, house maids or relatives.
- SARD-Net staff staying long at work denying the children their rights to be cared for by their parents because of the following examples:- in order to meet the deadlines of reports, concept papers submission in search of funding and meeting project proposals deadlines.

3.1 Reporting Concerns and Child Protection Incidents

SARD-Net staff/volunteers/consultants are required to report any instance of serious abuse or neglect (cases in which a child or young person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from abuse or neglect) immediately.

A failure to report instances, allegations, disclosures or concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or young person (by employees and volunteers within our organisation or by others) will be viewed as a serious matter that may, depending on the circumstances, result in disciplinary action or be grounds for dismissal.

When a child discloses allegations of abuse or neglect it is imperative that employees and volunteers maintain basic principles of active listening to a child or young person – be calm, supportive and reassuring, concentrate on how they are feeling rather than questions and answers, and explain what you are going to do.

3.2 Reporting of concerns or allegations regarding abuse or neglect by family or other external sources

1. When an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made, employees and volunteers will notify the focal person for the child safeguard policy or their immediate supervisor

immediately. The child is believed to be at imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger, notification will be made to focal person for the child safeguard or Police immediately.

2. If the immediate supervisor or the focal person for the child safeguard policy is not available, (or they are the subject of the complaint), the worker is required to report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) directly.

3. SARD-Net will provide a contact point for concerns raised by the parents or external parties; and works with other persons to respond to incident reports when staffs are involved.

4. All our employees and volunteers retain the right to report directly to relevant authorities, such as police or child protection, any concerns they may have in relation to the safety and welfare of a child or young person, regardless of if they have also reported that matter internally.

5. A written record of observations and any statements made by the child or young person must be made. These observations are to be recorded on SARD-Net 'Child Abuse Report Form'.

All details must be treated as highly confidential.

In taking a report of concern, or of an incident, from others within our organisation our employees and volunteers are:

a) Not to assess the validity of such allegations or concerns, but to report all allegations or concerns to the nominated person or persons within our organisation as described in this procedure.

b) To disregard factors such as the authority or position of the persons involved and any pre-existing views about the good character or otherwise, of any person involved or under investigation.

c) In situations where a child or young person is making an allegation, our employees and volunteers are required to: listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute; or clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions.

6. Assist in addressing the support needs of those impacted by the allegation including: the child and their family; the person against whom the complaint is made by, for example, offering professional counselling; other employees and volunteers impacted by the allegations.

7. Make clear to other employees and volunteers who are aware of the allegation that: the allegation does not mean the person is guilty, and that the allegation will be properly investigated; they are not to discuss the matter with any person, except as

directed by police, child protection authorities and/or SARD-Net and only in direct relation to investigation of the allegation.

8. All instances, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns of abuse or neglect of a child or young person arising from an action by an employee or volunteer within our organisation will be investigated and will be the subject of a Critical Incident Review.

9. SARD-Net maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person and/or investigation of the allegation.

10. Documentation as part of our policy for responding to reports or allegations of child abuse, SARD-Net has developed a Child abuse Reporting Form, which is to be used to document any allegation, disclosure, incident or concern regarding child abuse. In situations where our employees and volunteers become aware of abuse whether through observation of potential indicators, such as bruises or cuts, or by directly observing potentially abusive behaviour towards a child or young person, they are required to use our Child abuse Reporting Form or required form for contractual reporting.

11.SARD-Net maintains and regularly monitors records of child abuse reports as part of our Incident Management processes to ensure that there is compliance and integrity with this policy; and that requirements for reporting to external authorities are complied with. The follow-up from incidents are to be incorporated into risk identification and management planning.

3.3 Accountability, Monitoring & Review

This section spells out how the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy will be monitored, and how the policy will be reviewed.

Everyone has a responsibility for ensuring that the Child Safeguarding Policy is implemented as set out in the policy and procedures outline in this document and as may be adapted to suit local conditions.

- Based on the self-assessment, an annual plan of action will be developed to address any gaps in policy implementation and to mitigate any risks identified.

The Safeguarding focal person will monitor trends, and ensure these are considered as part of the annual review.

- This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, but not more than every five years. Such reviews will also include feedback

from staff, board and where possible, the views of children, their families as well as other local stakeholders.

4. References

4.1 Resources

The following resources were used to develop the Child Safeguard Policy and they include the following;

- Understanding Child Safeguarding – Facilitators Guide (2014) <http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/resources/understanding-child-safeguarding-facilitators-guide>.
- Developing Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures – Facilitators Guide (2014) <http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/resources/developing-child-safeguarding-policy-and-procedures-facilitators-guide>.
- SARD-Net’s Code of Conduct (June 2018).
- SARD-Net’s Commitment Statement to safeguarding programme participants (children and adults) (June 2018).
- Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development Network (SARD-Net) Human Resource Policy 2016 .

4.2 Working Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, and procedures contained within it, the following working definitions are used:

Abuse: Used in its widest sense and includes physical, emotional/psychological and sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, violence and exploitation in all forms.

Physical abuse: This is causing physical harm to a child and it includes; burning, pushing, beating, tying, knocking on the head, shaking the child violently, punching and slapping. Physical abuse may result into scars that will never go away and most of the serious physical harm lead to disabilities.

Emotional abuse: This is causing emotional pain and it includes; insults, lazy, you will never be a clean person, ever dirty, abusing a child verbally like you are dense, stupid and hopeless, demeaning and belittling a child like you will never succeed in life, what can you also do?

Emotional abuse is the most painful to a child and the most difficult to treat because it is not visible but affects the feelings and thinking of the child leading to loss of confidence and self-esteem.

Sexual abuse: This is exploitation which aims at satisfying one's lust for sex. It involves penetrative sex, in case of a child it is called defilement, bad touches by touching of sensitive

parts, touching a person in a sexual manner, using sexual language, kissing and exposing the child to pornography and using sexual gestures.

Child labour: This is work that is mentally, physically, socially and or morally dangerous and harmful to children. It is also making a child work beyond his age and capability and being paid little or no money at all for the work done.

Child trafficking: Is taking the child away from home through persuasive means from parents or snatching the child from the way or sweet talking the child until the child consents and later sell of the child to unknown person who takes the child and uses the child for his or her own benefit in a different land or country by way of making the child a sex worker who generates money for one's benefit under the expense of the child or making the child someone's slave. Also use of children in armed conflict like abducting of children for example northern Ugandan war insurgency of child abduction and training children to kill people.

Child sacrifice: Child sacrifice is a practice which is most common in Uganda which denies children their rights to live by unknown evil people who practice witchcraft in an effort to grow wealthy in the expense of a child's life and blood. Child

sacrifice involves cutting off the child's head which kills the child instantly, cutting off the child's private part and other parts of the body in the name of seeking wealth.

Child neglect: This refers to failure to provide for basic care and support to children under our care. The kind of negligence involves; not providing health care when a child is sick by not bothering to take the child for medical care, educational by not taking the child to school and guiding the child in his or her homework, emotion by not providing emotional support to the child for instance not listening to the problems the child tries to narrate to you, not sensing the emotional change of the child and asking to know it from the child what the problem is, not saying sorry to the child in case the child feels angry for something you have done to him or her and spiritual development by not teaching our children to learn how to worship God and pray to him, sing praises to him, not bathing the child, not guiding the child's behaviour, not giving the child information that can help him or her know the bad things that can happen to her or him, what to do if he senses them or where to run or how to defend him or herself, tricks people use to steal them and categories of people who can easily harm them and what is taking place around the country and the world.

There are many ways children are abused and this varies from culture to culture, community to community but in Uganda the above are some of the abuses children under go.

4.3 Appendices

The Code of Conduct must be signed by all staff and standing volunteers BEFORE commencing duties.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct.

I will always seek to care for and protect the rights of children, and act in a manner that ensures that their best interests shall be the paramount consideration.

I will not engage in sexual exploitation or abuse of targeted beneficiaries, and I have a duty of care towards children.

I undertake not to abuse the power and influence that I have by my position over the lives and well-being of the targeted beneficiaries.

I will neither solicit nor engage in commercial exchange of sexual services as such relationships may undermine the credibility and the image of SARD-Net.

I am aware that SARD-Net strongly discourages sexual relationships between its staff members and targeted beneficiaries, although these relations are not exploitative or abusive. Such relationships may undermine the credibility and the integrity of SARD-Net and of the staff members involved. Should I find myself in such a relationship with the targeted beneficiaries that I consider non-exploitative and

consensual, I will report this to my manager for appropriate guidance in the knowledge that this matter will be treated with due discretion.

I will not engage in sexual activity with children under the age of 18 years. Mistaken belief in the age of the child does not constitute a defence.

Risk management: SARD-Net ensures that risks are identified and minimized from the planning stage through to the implementation stage of activities.

The duty of notification: any suspected violation or any actual violation of the current Code of Conduct must be reported immediately to the supervisor or SARD-Net's Child Safeguarding Focal Point. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire procedure.

By signing the Code of Conduct, I explicitly agree that;

All staff, consultants and volunteers working with SARD-Net must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.

- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetuate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour to children.

It is important for all staff, consultants and volunteers working with SARD-Net and in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them.
- Plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks.
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children.
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.

- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights and responsibilities, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate for staff to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

Declaration of commitment

I..... Confirm that I have received and read the SARD-Net Child Safeguarding Policy. It has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to seek clarifications on any points not clear to me.

I am now fully aware of my obligations as a member of staff/volunteer/visitor of SARD-Net to act according to the requirements of this Policy. These include appropriate professional behavior and the responsibility to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse of children that come to my attention.

I understand the consequences entailed if I fail to act in accordance with the Policy.

Sign.....

Date.....

Appendix 2: Guide for Occasional Volunteers and Visitors

All volunteers and visitors must abide by the following guide as noted below:

To ensure he/she minimizes the risk of harmful relationships from developing, correspondence between visitors and children is discouraged, and should the need arise it should be sent via SARD-Net for monitoring rather than directly to the child.

Volunteers must not develop special relationships with children and encourage these to develop outside of the normal work environment. Visitors must not exchange contact details when meeting children and young people.

All volunteering opportunities and visits to projects must be arranged officially, with the permission of the SARD-Net Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate the pain of traumatic events.

Not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of their sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.

No staging: do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.

Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking to a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.

Obtain permission from SARD-Net, child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually only ensured if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.

Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer. In film, video and radio interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story. Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

Make sure that the safety of the child will not be compromised if one disseminates images of his or her home, community or environment.

Be accompanied by an employee of SARD-Net while doing a report (video, photo, etc.).

Ensure that the child does not pose in any inappropriate manner (sexual connotations etc.).

Do not take or publish photos of children who are completely naked or dressed inappropriately. Images of children which are exploitative or offensive must not be used.

Taking pictures or videos is reserved for strictly professional use. Staff, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to 'like' and 'share' photographs published on official SARD-Net websites and social media sites (such as Facebook).

To protect children from the bad effects of above mentioned on-line child abuse and exploitation SARD-Net puts down the following guidelines to be followed by the staff, partners, and volunteers in order to prevent the vice.

No staff, volunteer, partner working with SARD-Net shall be involved in the Production, viewing and sharing online of naked pictures or videos showing children in sexual poses.

It is the responsibility of every staff/volunteer to report producers, transmitters & recipients to Police or Child helpline on 116 toll free or NITA on www.report.nita.go.ug/ug.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Guide for occasional volunteers and visitors, and agree to abide by its contents.

Name..... Date..... Sign.....

Appendix 3: Parental Consent Form.

SARD-Net is an agricultural based country a Network of members who believe in a farming system that is based on a process that strives to meet the needs necessary for an integrated, happy life of those depending on it for their livelihood by mainstreaming the sustainable use of the available human, physical, financial, social and natural capital resources. SARD-Net works with farmers at household level and may sometimes involve children directly or indirectly in its intervention. Before we can engage the children, we would wish to seek the consent of every parent/caregiver. Children in this case refer to persons under the age of 18 years old.

Activity Consent (Please tick as appropriate):

I/we.....
..... give my/our consent for my/our
child..... to travel to and
participate in SARD-Net activities. I/we authorize SARD-Net to be
responsible for my/our child during these activities and authorize
them to make decisions concerning any emergency medical treatment
for my/our child which may be required during this trip. I/we affirm
that I/we have full authority to give the consent provided for in this
document.

Date..... Sign.....

Appendix 4: Child Safeguarding Focal Point.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point:

To support the National secretariat operations with the day to day implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy – with the technical support of the Chief Executive Officer (SARD-Net).

Specific duties include:

- To act as first point of contact for concerns regarding child protection incidents and to raise those concerns to the focal person Child Safeguarding Policy.
- To advise and support staff and partners with the implementation of the safeguarding policy – including risk assessments.
- Establish links with local specialist child welfare, health and law enforcement contacts in order to have information available if an incident occurs and/or external advice is needed.
- To ensure that staff and partners are aware of the Child Safeguarding Policy and their responsibilities under it (for example by providing training and guidance).
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy and our commitment to children's rights is made known to children, families and communities who work with SARD-Net, and that the policy is accessible.
- Ensure that the name and contact details of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point are made available so that people know how to raise a concern/where to seek advice.

- To act as first point of contact for concerns regarding child protection incidents and to raise those concerns to the Senior Manager/Regional Child Protection Advisor as appropriate.
- Keep an accurate record of any incidents.
- To support the implementation and monitoring of the Child Safeguarding Policy by providing an annual progress report to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (as requested) together with a plan for further action required to implement the Child Safeguarding Policy at local level.

Suggested Skills and Characteristics:

- Have knowledge and experience about child safeguarding and child protection.
- Be approachable, with good communication skills with adults and children.
- Be able to keep calm when a concern is raised, especially if a child needs assistance.
- Be able to work with others to ensure that the policy is implemented, and respond where a child protection incident occurs.
- Commitment to safeguarding children and upholding their rights – together with the ability to advocate for and defend safeguarding.
- Training and presentation skills.
- Be able to keep information confidential.

Appendix 5: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language

“Rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is best is for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1; Every one under 18 years has these rights.

Article 2; All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3; All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4; The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 5; Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6; You have the right to be alive.

Article 7; You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8; You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9; You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you. **Article 10;** If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11; You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12; You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13; You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14; You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15; You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others. **Article 16;** You have the right to privacy.

Article 17; You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18; You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible. **Article 19;** You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20; You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21; You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22; You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23; You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24; You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25; If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26; You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27; You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28; You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29; Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30; You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

Article 31; You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32; You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33; You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34; You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

Article 35; No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 36; You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 37; No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way. **Article 38;** You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39; You have the right to help I f you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40; You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41; If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42; You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

Articles 43 to 54; These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure that the rights of the children is promoted and realized.

Appendix 6: Child Protection Report Form

CHILD'S INFORMATION

Name of a child	
Age	
Date of Birth	
Sex	
Place of residence	
Telephone number	
Name of Person whom a child stays/lives with	
Relationship of the child with a person he/she lives /stays with	
Type of disability (If any)	

(c) What exactly happened?

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5. Have you done child assessment by speaking to the child? If yes, what did the child say?

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6. Did the child mention the abuser's name or describe the abuser's physical appearance? If yes what was the name or what was the description about? Please explain and describe as the child said.

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7. Did you speak to the parents or guardian about the abuse? Please provide the details of response by the parent/guardian.

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Did you inform Organization which works with children and those organizations working for children? If yes please, fill in this space:-

Name of Organization	
Date	
Officer consulted	
Contact of Officer contacted	
Signature of Officer Contacted if possible.	

Does the child require medical attention?

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Have you contacted the Police or local authority on the abuse? If yes, what is their response or what action did they take?

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If NO, Explain what prevented you from contacting the legal authorities?

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Appendix 7: Details of a Staff or Person Reporting /Assessing Abuse of the Child

<p>Name of a Person reporting</p>	
<p>Position of a person reporting</p>	
<p>Date and time</p>	
<p>Action taken further or recommended in relation to the concern <i>(This is to be done by a designated person who follows up the case)</i></p> <p>Time and date of action by person who follows up the case</p>	
<p>Result of the recommendations</p>	
<p>Signature of the Person assigned to follow up the recommendations and the stamp if available</p>	

SARD-Net

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