



JWOC Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Child abuse is an unfortunate reality in societies across the planet. Child abusers can be anyone, even those who work with or care for children. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Everybody has the responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
- We are all accountable and have a duty to help eradicate child abuse.

In line with the above guiding context and principles, Journeys Within Our Community (JWOC) is committed to protecting children from any form of abuse, especially in the delivery of JWOC's program activities.

Definitions

A *child* means every human being below the age of eighteen years, although principles within this policy are extended to the young adults within JWOC's projects.

Child abuse means sexual exploitation or other physical or mental harm deliberately caused to a child.

Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children.

Statement of Commitment

As an organization working with children JWOC is committed to a strict child protection policy to ensure that children participating in its projects are not exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect.

The guidelines in this Child Protection Policy protect both the child from abuse and adults from unfounded allegations. JWOC is committed to:

- Respecting the rights and dignity of the children, families and communities with whom we work.
- Demonstrating commitment to actively preventing child abuse.
- Taking positive action to prevent child abusers from becoming involved with JWOC in any way and take stringent measures against any JWOC associate who commits child abuse.

To ensure the above commitment JWOC will follow the:

- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Cambodian constitution
- Cambodian laws on child rights

Persons involved

This policy applies to all associates of JWOC: interns, volunteers, employees, prospective employees, consultants, contractors, partner organization members and visitors. The term 'JWOC associates' will be used throughout this policy.

JWOC has three on-ground Child Protection Officers. Their names and contact details are displayed in the office, library and outside Classrooms A and B. These details are written in both Khmer and English.



The JWOC Director and Child Protection Officers are responsible for:

- Effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy.
- Promoting Child Protection throughout the organization.
- Coordinating and facilitating training and procedures for JWOC associates.
- Monitoring internal and external policy compliance and coordinating policy reviews.
- Serving as the central contact points for enquires (internal and external) about child abuse and child protection.

To effectively manage risks to children, JWOC requires the active support and cooperation of all personnel engaged in implementing JWOC's program activities. All personnel must meet the terms of this Child Protection Policy and will be held accountable for complying with it.

Visitors to JWOC

- To minimize disruption and risk visitors wishing to participate in or observe classes or other activities can only come at pre-arranged times.
- The Director must be made aware of any visitors who have arranged to come to JWOC.
- All visitors must sign-in at the JWOC entrance and be provided with and display a JWOC visitor badge for the entirety of their visit.
- All visitors interacting with children must be observed by at least one member of JWOC staff.
- No visitor can be left alone.
- Photography is only permitted if JWOC management (Director and Program Managers) gives approval.

Recruitment

- Advertisements for job vacancies will make clear that JWOC is committed to child protection and that prospective employees' commitment to child protection is a condition of employment.
- JWOC will not knowingly employ or use the services of anyone known or likely to pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- All prospective JWOC associates will be informed of the Child Protection Policy at the start of any recruiting process.
- JWOC reserves the right to not offer or to terminate a contract if reference checks reveal that the person is not suitable to work with children for any reason that may put children at risk.
- All JWOC associates will be required to immediately disclose all charges, convictions and any other outcomes of an offence which occurred before or occurs during their association with JWOC that relates to child abuse.
- The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed during new staff or long-term volunteer orientation.
- All successful candidates and existing representatives are clearly informed of their contractual agreement to comply with this policy and sign and comply with JWOC's Child Protection Code of Conduct prior to commencing work.

Code of Conduct

This code of conduct gives guidelines for appropriate and proper behavior for JWOC associates when interacting with children (and young adults).

- No child is to be taken away from JWOC by an associate without the knowledge and permission of the Director.



- No child is to be taken to any JWOC associates' home, guesthouse, hotel or accommodation.
- No JWOC associate is permitted to socialize with the children outside the JWOC premises apart from a friendly conversation (Young adults can be met in a public place with the knowledge and permission of the Director).
- No presents of any kind are to be bought for the children without prior arrangement with the Director.
- JWOC associates are to not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- JWOC associates must display appropriate language, actions and relationships with children at all times that are in line with Cambodian culture and customs.
- JWOC associates must not exert inappropriate physical force when dealing with children. This includes, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping or any other action that could cause fear, intimidation or distress.
- All activities with children must be conducted in locations where there is visual contact with outside. In cases where it is necessary to close a door for privacy sake, two adults must be present.
- Inappropriate conduct toward children, including failure to follow the behavior standards stated above, is grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment and police notification and legal action.

Communications about children

- The lives of children, their families, and members of their community must be represented with accuracy and dignity. All communications must present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- Children should be adequately clothed in photographs and videos and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.
- Real names and location of vulnerable children should be changed and it should be indicated that they have been changed.
- When sending images and videos electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.

Reporting and investigating abuse or suspected abuse

- It is mandatory for any JWOC associate who has knowledge of, suspects, or has witnessed a potential child protection issue to immediately report to the Director, either directly or via a Child Protection Officer. If the Director is the cause for concern then the Board Chair or the relevant law enforcement will be informed.
- Failure to report suspected child abuse or misconduct may result in disciplinary action.
- On receipt of the report, the Director and Child Protection Officers will begin an internal investigation and where appropriate file a complaint with the relevant authorities.
- A JWOC associate will be immediately and indefinitely suspended during investigation. The associate will be informed that an allegation has been made against him/her and they will be given the opportunity to respond.
- The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance to JWOC and therefore any investigation will respect the privacy and safety of the child and efforts will be made to make the investigation as child friendly as possible.



Response to internal investigation

- In the event an allegation is proven to be untrue, or even fabricated, appropriate steps will be taken for follow-up with the person who has been accused, the child, and the person who reported the incident. Efforts will be made to provide assistance to an associate accused of abuse including counselling or other appropriate forms of support.
- If abuse is proven by the investigation, every effort will be made to assist the child in coping with any physical or emotional trauma he or she may be experiencing. This may include medical treatment, psychological counselling or any other form of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate.
- If the investigation concludes that child abuse has occurred JWOC staff will be subject to disciplinary action within JWOC, up to and including dismissal. Other JWOC associates will be removed with immediate effect.
- If the investigation concludes that abuse has occurred which is subject to criminal prosecution according to national laws, all findings will be reported to the relevant national police authorities and full cooperation afforded them during an external investigation. If the accused is an expatriate or visitor, the relevant law enforcement authorities will also be informed with due regard given to the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of origin.
- In the event an associate is discharged for proven child abuse, JWOC will disclose such information as requested.

Review of child protection policy

JWOC's Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier if warranted, and lessons learned incorporated into subsequent versions.