



ARFH

Working Together, Building a Healthier Future

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

2022

K. A. Osewura

Address:

**Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH)
Express Way, Trade and Convention Centre,
The Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Complex, KM8, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Airport Rd,
beside Shoprite, Lugbe,
Federal Capital Territory,
Abuja, Nigeria**

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Acknowledgement

The Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) developed a maiden Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) in 2013 with technical assistance from Save the Children International (SCI), updated in 2015, reviewed in 2018 and subsequently, to accommodate emerging issues in programming for children, with support from USAID and technical guidance from ‘Keeping Children Safe (KCS) UK’. The review entailed a week-long training of OVC Implementing Partners (IPs) in Nigeria on Child Safeguarding Procedures by USAID and KCS, followed by intensive review of Child Safeguarding Policies of IPs, which culminated in the finalization of this CSP, in line with global standards.

We are indeed very grateful and wish to express our appreciation to the USAID Nigeria Team for the training and subsequent review of our CSP. The valued support and guidance received from the USAID Agreement Officer Representative (AOR), Mrs. Doreen Magaji, is duly acknowledged.

Worthy of note are the contributions and ingenuity demonstrated by Keeping Children Safe (KCS) UK, during the training and follow up phases, which strengthened capacity of the IPs to identify gaps and review their CSPs with minimal supervision. We want to place on record our immense delight with the efforts of the Lead Facilitator from KCS (UK), Ms. Angie Bamgbose, for her commitment and esteemed guidance during the CSP review exercise.

We are equally grateful to the leadership of ARFH, particularly the President Emeritus, Professor O. A. Ladipo, for his various inputs. Special thanks to the Management of Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award (ICHSSA-2), especially the Chief of Party, ARFH-ICHSSA-2 Project, Dr. Felix Iwuala and the Director of Finance and Operations, Mr. Oluwagbemiga Ayeni, for their painstaking review of the ARFH’s CSP.

Dr. Felix Iwuala
Chief of Party,
USAID Supported,
Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award
(ICHSSA-2) Project, Nigeria,
Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH).



1.0 Background

ARFH is a leading Nigerian NGO that has implemented a variety of innovative projects across Nigeria, both directly, and through local partners addressing issues of HIV prevention, and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people. ARFH's mission is to initiate, promote, and implement, in partnership with other organizations, developmental, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health programs to reduce disease burdens in Nigeria. ARFH has pioneered effective strategies in reaching children/adolescents and young people with life skills training and Reproductive Health Information, implemented through the Family Life HIV/AIDS Education curriculum, used in public schools and through the Peer Education Training on adolescents' reproductive health—ARH/HIV&AIDS.

ARFH is providing gender sensitive care and support services to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (below 18years) aimed at increasing access to comprehensive integrated social services (education, health, nutrition, protection and psychosocial support). ARFH is implementing OVC projects with support from USAID, in partnership with the Federal and State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (F/SMWASD), OVC NGOs, CSOs and a range of Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Some of the recently implemented and ongoing OVC projects supported by USAID include the USAID-PEPFAR Links for Children Project (2009-2014), USAID-PEPFAR STEER OVC Project (2013-2018), being implemented in partnership with Save the Children International, in addition to the USAID Local Partners for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Project in Nigeria, Region one (LOPIN 1 Project 2014-2019), including the ongoing Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award (ICHSSA-2) Project (2019-2024). Prior to this period, ARFH also implemented the consolidated Global Fund Rounds 5 & 9 OVC Project (2007-2015), in Nigeria.

As a national non-governmental organization concerned with public health challenges, ARFH has a moral responsibility to protect children and other vulnerable groups. A Child Safeguarding Policy is needed, not only to protect children (especially vulnerable children, for example those affected by HIV and AIDS, those who are destitute and those with disabilities) but also for the organizations and individuals who work with and for them.

ARFH believes in human rights and equal opportunities for all its staff, partner agencies and project beneficiaries. We are concerned about the safety, protection and wellbeing of children involved in our programs. By definition, children are vulnerable and at a greater risk of abuse and exploitation from older children, adults, and peers. ARFH believes that a Child Safeguarding Policy is crucial to:

- Ensure that effective procedures and guidelines are put in place to protect children less than 18 years of age from coming to intentional or unintentional harm
- Fulfil our legal, moral and organizational obligations
- Raise awareness and increase understanding of staff and partners on child protection Agencies working for and with children have a responsibility to make their organizations safe for the children that they are working with and on behalf of. ARFH is playing a leading role to ensure that all partners providing services to Orphans and Vulnerable Children conduct their activities in line with the provisions of this child protection and safeguarding policy developed 2013, reviewed 2015 and further reviewed 2018 and subsequently, to accommodate emerging issues in programming for children.



2.0 Principles

This ARFH Child Protection Policy is based on the already established Child Safeguarding Standards of USAID and the Keeping Children Safe Organization UK child standards. It complements 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*; including the *National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (2013-2020)*, the *Child Rights Act 2003*, the *Interagency Standing Committee Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse which prohibits sexual activity with children regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally¹ and international best practice*. The various declarations and policies are unanimous on the fact that:

- 2.1 All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- 2.2 Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- 2.3 Organizations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
- 2.4 Organizations like ARFH recognize the responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.
- 2.5 All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.



3.0 Definitions and Terms

3.1 Definition of a Child:

A child or children are defined as persons who have not attained 18 years of age.

The age of 18 years relates primarily to the generally acceptable age of maturity. In Nigeria, this is the age of voting; and the official marriage age for females (OVC NPA 2020, Child's Rights Act 2003).

3.2 Child Safeguarding

Child Safeguarding refers to all activities intended to prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation, or neglect by ARFH personnel, contractors, and recipients or as a result of ARFH-supported programming. It is the responsibility of the organization to make sure that our staff, operations, and programs **do no harm to children**, do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which we work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

3.3 Definitions of Abuse

As regards to the child, abuse refers to any form of physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm, exploitation or neglect of a child

3.3.1 Physical abuse:

Actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child.

¹Interagency Six Core Principles Related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/iasc_six_core_principles_relating_to_sexual_exploitation_and_abuse_sept_2019.pdf

Such acts may include, but are not limited to: punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, or hitting (regardless of object used), or burning. These acts are considered abuse regardless of whether they were intended to hurt the child or not.

3.3.2 Sexual abuse:

Forcing or enticing a child 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, incest, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. 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.

3.3.3 Child sexual exploitation:

Child 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 neighbourhoods. 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. In other words, it is a form of sexual abuse that involves children 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, 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.

3.3.4 Neglect and negligent treatment:

Allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers 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 as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

3.3.5 Emotional abuse or ill treatment:

Constitutes injury to the psychological capacity of the child.

Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

4.0 Rules

4.1 Implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy:

4.1.1 Scope

The following people will be required to comply with the provisions of the Child Safeguarding Policy and see to its implementation at all relevant levels:



- (a) all staff, full time, part time, international and national, and to those engaged on short-term contracts, e.g. consultants, researchers etc. (referred to as “staff”);
- (b) volunteers, board members, trustees (referred to as “representatives”);
- (c) staff and representatives of partner agencies, sub grantees and any other individuals, groups or organizations who have a formal/contractual relationship with ARFH that involves them having contact with children - unless it has been agreed under the contractual agreement that the partner agency or sub grantee may enforce its own safeguarding or protection policy (referred to as “staff of partner agencies”)

4.1.2 Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit ARFH programmes or offices and may come into contact with children must be given an abridged copy of this policy (code of conduct for study and endorsement) and be made aware that they must act in accordance with it whilst visiting programs or offices and partners at the sub national levels.

4.1.3 All ARFH staff and representatives must act in accordance with this policy in both their professional and their personal lives.

4.1.4 All ARFH staff and representatives must sign the Child Safeguarding policy at the time of issuing of any employment contract and annually, to show that they are aware of this policy. The reporting procedures must also be shared and they must agree to act in accordance with these documents.

5.0 Prevention

ARFH and Partners will adopt the under listed measures to protect children from various forms of abuse:

5.1 Risk Assessment/Risk mitigation

ARFH will assess risk to children from all organizational/project activities, staff and operations and develop strategies to minimize those risks. Towards this end, a risk assessment of all operations, and project activities will be conducted. HR procedures manage potential risks from staff- see section 5.2 below.

5.1.2. Safe Program Design

ARFH is committed to design and deliver programs which are safe for children. During the design of all project and programs ARFH will identify and assess risks. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, to minimize the risks to children (where applicable), taking into consideration the time, terrain and location for such activities e.g. Adolescent girls meetings and Kids Club. Ongoing risk assessments will be conducted and risks mitigated during program implementation.

5.2 Safe recruitment

5.2.1 Personnel recruitment: The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced personnel is a vital aspect of ARFH’s child safeguarding and protection policy. A clear and proactive inclusion of child safeguarding in recruitment of staff can deter applications from individuals who may place young people at risk during their employment. For this reason, ARFH includes

reference to child safeguarding at various stages of the recruitment process, particularly for roles that are likely to have a higher level of contact with projects and partners.



6.0 Recruitment and Advertising

6.1 Advertisements for jobs should make it clear that the organization has a child safeguarding policy in place.

6.2 Application packs include a statement on the Child Safeguarding Policy, itemizing what is required in the recruitment process as a result, and make it clear that employment is contingent on commitment to the policy.

6.3 The interview panel are aware of the implications of the policy for a recruitment interview, including some knowledge of appropriate questions and signs to look out for during the interview.

6.4 Job offers are made subject to satisfactory checks.

6.5 All applicants are required to submit names of three referees who provide both verbal and written references, a requirement of which includes a statement as to the referees considered view on the candidate's suitability to be in direct contact with children.

Candidates are checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of child 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. In addition, newly engaged staff are placed on probation to ensure their suitability for the position.

7.0 Code of Conduct

This is applicable during and after office hours (24/7).

A copy of the ARFH's Code of Conduct on Child Safeguarding to be endorsed by ARFH Staff and Partners is on Annex A.



8.0 Training of Management and other Staff on Child Safeguarding Policy

ARFH has trained all and designated staff on CSP and re-orientation and update is provided annually for staff and CBOs during retreats, in order to achieve best practice in the area of child protection and safeguarding. Newly appointed staff are also trained. Orientation has been provided to Board members; refreshers will be provided sequel to subsequent reviews of the CSP. It is a mandatory requirement for all ARFH staff especially the Management and Board of Directors to be fully informed about their responsibilities in the implementation of the child safeguarding policy. These trainings emphasize ARFH's commitment and obligation to child safeguarding. All records of training and updates including certificates where applicable must be filed. This will be mandatory for all the staff and Board members of ARFH. All the trainings are tailored to address all the components of the CSP including risk assessments and mitigation measures to ensure successful and safe project implementation without posing any risk to the children. Other considerations will include recruitment checks for staffing for ARFH and Partners, time, terrain and location for the implementation of project activities.





9.0 Mandatory Obligations of ARFH and Partners on the Policy

All agreements between a) ARFH and b) implementing partners, other individuals, groups or organizations who have a formal/contractual relationship to the organization that involve their having contact with children include agreement on the Child Safeguarding policy. Partner agencies must adopt this policy or have developed their own policy of a similar standard. Partnership agreements must clearly outline agreed procedures for reporting and investigating concerns involving breaches of the policy involving issues of child abuse and exploitation. Updates will be provided as appropriate.



10.0 Child Safeguarding: ARFH's Communication Policy and Guidelines

10.1 Use of images and children's information

ARFH is committed to undertake all communications in a safe manner, to avoid derogatory or humiliating conducts and ensure safe storage of children's data.

In our use of information and visual images, both photographic stills and video, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities.

Our communications policy/guidelines, details our procedures (Annex B).



11.0 Roles of ARFH CSP Designated Officers

11.1 Disseminate the policy and

11.2 Ensure compliance to this Policy

11.3 Act as resource persons to the organization

11.4 Play leading roles in reporting and follow up of child protection referrals to the Local Government Social Welfare Officer.

11.5 Review child protection and safeguarding policies submitted to ARFH by prospective Partners.

11.6 On receipt of any case of abuse, the designated officer will act in line with the reporting procedures on the reporting form.

11.7 A database of all incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse and actions taken will be recorded by the designated officer at the end of each year and stored in a secure and confidential location.



12.0 Management of Reported Cases of Abuse

12.1 All staff and representatives must be aware that any allegation of the abuse or exploitation of children made against them will be investigated, under these Child Safeguarding policies:

12.2 All staff and representatives must be aware that cases of abuse will be referred to statutory authorities for criminal investigation and prosecution under the law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (this also applies to any representative or staff of any partner agency with whom ARFH has agreed child protection protocols); and/or

12.2.1 Subjected to punitive action by ARFH in accordance with the Personnel Policy Manual Disciplinary procedures and the protocol for dealing with suspected abuse and exploitation, which may result in dismissal.



13.0 Guidance Notes

13.1 ARFH has a commitment to child safeguarding, through its program activities, policies and behaviour as exhibited by the board of Trustees for the development of this policy.

13.2 Safeguarding children is an organization-wide responsibility. Within this broad approach, there are specific responsibilities within departments and positions. This is reflected in the actions require session below. This Child Safeguarding policy is regarded as the overarching set of responsibilities, the implementation of which is enabled through the other policies and procedures of the organization (**Child Safeguarding– Internal reporting protocol Whistle Blowing Policy and the Personnel Policy Manual**) and related guidance and supporting tools.

13.3 This Child Safeguarding Policy is in addition (and complementary) to the general principles of behaviour within ARFH **Personnel Policy Manual**. It specifies the professional behaviour and good practice expected from all staff and representatives in relation to children.

13.4 The **Reporting Procedures** provide practical steps for when and how to report concerns. These procedures will also identify when and how to report issues that occur outside of our agency. They also identify the mandatory process for reporting **all concerns** which involve representatives of ARFH.

13.5 Adhering to these Policies, Procedures and Guidance will safeguard children from abuse, ensure concerns are responded to professionally and may safeguard staff and representatives from allegations of misconduct or abuse.

13.6 By following this policy, staff and representatives will be both playing their part in safeguarding children, and developing best practice in working with children. As with the general rules for staff members, if a staff member breaks this policy or fails to meet the standard of behaviour that it requires, **disciplinary action will be taken**. This may include dismissal and/or referral to national authorities for criminal investigation and prosecution, should you break the law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in which an offence is committed.

13.7 Guidance on good practice in this area is available and the **Keeping Children Safe materials** are specifically designed to assist partner agencies develop robust child safeguarding systems.

14.0 Responsibilities

All staff and representatives must:

- Sign annually, an undertaken to document, to prevent, report on and avoid sexual abuse, including implementing the principles of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Report concerns that a child is a victim or is at risk of being sexually exploited immediately in accordance with the Reporting Procedures.
- Undertake induction and training on this policy which is relevant and appropriate to their position.
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations.
- Respond to a child who may have been abused/exploited in accordance with the Reporting Procedures and in accordance with their best interest and safety.



- Identify, minimise and attempt to avoid potential situations of risk for children
- Identify and avoid potential situations, which may lead to staff behaviour being misinterpreted, e.g. spending excessive time with a child alone without permission from supervisor
- Ensure, when making images of children e.g. photographs, videos, that they are respectful, that the children are adequately clothed and that sexually suggestive poses are avoided;
- Ensure that any image or recorded case history of a child does not place him/her at risk or render him/her vulnerable to any form of abuse.
- Ensure the safe participation of children, if any child is to participate in any activity other than as a beneficiary, e.g. documentary, a campaigning event, awards ceremony, panel
 - Kids Club, Children’s Day celebration, social networks and the Children’s Parliament.

Responsibilities (All Offices)

14.1 Departments and Units

Boards of Trustees and Directors; President/Chief Executive Officer; Vice President/Executive Director; Director of Finance & Administration, Director of Programs, Coordinators of Programs and M&E, Managers of Programs and M&E, Procurements & Logistics, Human Resources and Administration; and All staff.

14.2 Actions required

(a) Boards of Trustees and Directors:

- (i) to accept and adopt this policy for the Organization; in addition to being familiar with the contents.
- (ii) to ensure it is widely communicated within the organization as a commitment to safeguard children at the highest realm.

(b) President/Chief Executive Officer:

- (i) To ensure that all program departments and Operations staff receive this policy and have the necessary training and induction as part of the recruitment process.
- (ii) Identify a member of staff to serve as the child safeguarding focal person; this responsibility can be a part of this member of staff job description.
- (ii) Ensure the policy is communicated to all staff, representatives and donors.

(c) Human Resources and Administration to review and update this policy as and when necessary. Human Resources:

- (i) to ensure that staff and representatives prior to or at the time of issuing any employment contract receive and understand this policy;
- (ii) that they are aware of e Child Safeguarding reporting procedures;
- (iii) and sign the policy as declaration of acceptance
- (iv) to ensure that all current and new trustees are provided with this Child Safeguarding Policy and the reporting procedures, and are asked to sign as a declaration of acceptance to the principles and standards.
- (v) to ensure relevant induction trainings, refreshers and technical support are available for staff and other representatives in relation to safeguarding children.
- (vi) Update the Personnel Policy Manual to include this policy and any updates

(d) Directors of Programs and Finance

- (i) to ensure to design and deliver safe programs for beneficiaries
- (ii) to ensure Staff are monitored and supported to exhibit best practice behaviour when working with children
- (iii) to ensure staff receive relevant training and support in child protection relevant to their roles.

(e) Staff:

- (i) should follow the rules for staff and work to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation
- (ii) ensure that children with



15.0 Accountability/Reporting

The President/ Chief Executive Officer is responsible to the Board of Trustees and Directors for the contents of this policy.

The Executive Director reports to Trustees and Directors on its implementation as part of the organization annual reporting. Accountability for this policy is required based on department’s roles and responsibilities.



16.0 Monitoring and Review

16.1 Monitoring and review

ARFH will routinely monitor compliance of Partners and field staff with the Policy during quarterly visits to service delivery points. Regular monitoring of risks, risk mitigation and the effectiveness of the child safeguarding measures needs will be incorporated into ARFH’s normal monitoring processes and activities.

Child safeguarding will be incorporated into ARFH’s quarterly and annual reporting processes. Senior management and the Board of Trustees will regularly review the organization reports to ensure that child safeguarding measures are in place and effective.

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

Annex A

Code of Conduct for ARFH's Staff and Partners (This is applicable during and after office hours 24/7).

I,insert name..... acknowledge that I have read and understand ARFH's

Child Protection Policy, and agree that in the course of my association with ARFH, I must:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts, regardless of the age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence
- Not develop relationship with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive,
- Not act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse,
- Not do things for children of an intimate, personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Not condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive,
- Not act as negotiator in or assist the process of financial settlement between the family of a child victim of sexual abuse or exploitation and the perpetrator;
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- Not invite unaccompanied children into homes, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children 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 to exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material through any medium
- Not use physical punishment on children
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- Comply with all relevant local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with ARFH that relate to child exploitation and abuse.

It should also be noted that:

- During supervisory monitoring visits to service delivery points, staff should always be respectful of the privacy of children. In order to avoid a child being placed in a risk situation and /or staff being compromised, it is recommended that staff need to be vigilant while approaching dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets. Staff should observe safe care procedures.

- When activities involve taking children out on a day or overnight trips, it is the responsibility of all staff to conduct risk assessments and ensure that safe practices are upheld in relation to the transportation of children, adequate insurance, appropriate supervision and consent are fulfilled in order to protect the children from potential sources of abuse.

When photographing or filming a child or using children’s images for work-related purposes, I must:

- Assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used,
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children 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 facts
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

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

Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Annex B: ARFH's Policy on Communications

General

In our use of visual images, both photographic stills and video, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities.

Background

ARFH strongly supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which makes the best interests of the child a primary consideration (Art. 3), and states that every child has the right to privacy (Art. 16) and protection from all forms of exploitation (Art. 36). Whilst we acknowledge that images are an essential element in portraying our work to the general public and other constituencies, and for raising funds, we strive to maintain the dignity of everyone with whom we work and will not use images that are disrespectful or demeaning.

Aim

This document sets out the principles ARFH employs to regulate our use of images of children and their families. The guidelines that follow will be of particular use to staff in the field in contact with children and families.

Policy

In our use of visual images, we adhere to the following principles:

1. We will respect the dignity of the subject.

- We will always seek permission when taking photographs or video footage of individuals.
- Consent for taking and using photographs and case studies will be sought from parents and those with parental responsibility, or from the children directly when they are of sufficient age and understanding.
- Special considerations will be given to photographs depicting children with disabilities, refugees and those in situations of conflict and disasters, to accurately portray context and maintain dignity.
- Wherever possible, we will explain to the subject the likely use of the images.
- We will never take pictures of people who say they don't want to be photographed.

2. We will not exploit the subject.

- We will not manipulate the subject in a way which distorts the reality of the situation (eg. we will not ask them to cry for the camera).
- If necessary to protect confidentiality, the names of children and families will be changed.
- Never will a child's full name or contact details be published.

2. We aim to provide a balanced portrayal of reality in Nigerian Communities.

- We will avoid stereotypes (eg. Western aid worker tends helpless victim).
- We aim to show people helping and working for themselves, not as victims.

4. We will use images truthfully.

- Case histories/descriptions will not be fabricated, although they may be adapted or edited to preserve the dignity and confidentiality of the subject.
- We will not use an image of one thing and describe it as, or imply it is, an image of another (eg. We do not use an image of one project to illustrate the work of another).
- Where possible, we will use a balance of images (eg. positive and negative) to reflect the reality of a situation.
- If we use an image in a general way (eg. illustrating a project similar to the one being described), we will make this clear in the caption.
- We will not use an image in a way which deliberately misinterprets the true situation.
- If an image represents an exceptional situation, we will not use it in a way which suggests it is generally true.
- We aim to be confident that, to the best of our knowledge, the subject would regard the image and its use as truthful if s/he saw it.

5. We will maintain standards of taste and decency consistent with our values and those of our supporters.

- We will not use images which are erotic, pornographic or obscene.
- Images of dead or naked bodies will only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- We will not make gratuitous use of images of extreme suffering.

6. We will respect the views of our partner organizations.

We will be sensitive to the concerns and advice of our partner organizations in our gathering and use of visual material.

7. In disaster situations, we will treat in a positive manner the people whom we are helping.

- In any publicity material dealing with disasters, we will follow the policy in the Code of Conduct of the International Committee of the Red Cross information: “In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects”.
- In doing this, we shall portray an objective image of disasters, in which the capacities and aspirations of those affected are highlighted, not just their vulnerabilities and fears.
- We will not lose respect for those affected, but treat them as equal partners in action.
- We will co-operate with the media in order to enhance public response, but we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence.

8. We will maintain high technical standards.

- We aim to use only high-quality images.
- We may use digital manipulation of images for creative or iconic effect, but not in a way which deliberately and misleadingly distorts the reality of the situation depicted.
- We will not crop an image in a way which misleadingly distorts the reality of the situation.
- In video editing, we will not misleadingly distort the reality of the situation.

9. We will maintain a suitable photo library.

- Images will be current and appropriate.
- All images will be kept centrally and fully documented.
- Old images will be archived.

Guidelines for obtaining communication materials.

- Discuss the use of communication materials at the beginning of a program or project with children and communities – do not wait until the material is needed.
- Obtain general consent for the gathering of communication materials at the beginning of a program or project, and agree with children and communities the general messages and types of images that would be appropriate.
- Obtain images and any other private information for publication purposes in a safe and confidential manner.
- Children should be prepared for specific interviews prior to being interviewed.
- Pictures of children should always be decent and respectful.
- All children must be appropriately dressed, in communities where children wear few items of clothing, be particularly careful about the images you choose.
- Recorded images should focus on an activity, and where possible feature groups of children rather than individuals
- Make sure that photographers and film-makers are not allowed to spend time with or have access to children without supervision.
- Permission for the taking of photographs should be sought prior to events. Children that do not have permission for photographs to be taken should not be included in individual or group photographs. Where possible, event photographs should be taken in group settings at prearranged times.
- Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images should be reported and recorded, as with any other child safeguarding concern.

Guidelines for publishing information

- Only use the first names of children. Be careful not to reveal too many details about where they live, their school, hobbies etc.
- Ask for children's permission to use their photographs.
- Get their parent/guardian's consent, and ensure everyone understands how and where the images will be used.
- Where the risk of harm and stigma is high, take mitigating steps; for example, by concealing faces, using pseudonyms and vague geographical locations, and by non-disclosure of personal information (eg. HIV status).
- Try to take images that represent a broad range of children – boys and girls of various ages, abilities and ethnic groups.
- On websites, make sure any images you use are not tagged with the location of the child.
- Individuals or organizations requesting the use of resources depicting children, such as personal information, videos or photographs, should sign an agreement concerning the proper use of such materials. Failure to adhere to the terms could result in the termination of permission and the return of information.
- Pictures, materials and personal information regarding children should be held in a secure area where practicable, and every caution should be exercised to ensure its security.
- Access to these must be by way of permission only.

K. A. OSINOWO

Dr. Kehinde Osinowo

Chief Executive Officer,

Association for Reproductive & Family Health (ARFH)

Abuja Trade and Convention Center,

Behind Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry,

*Beside Novare Gateway Mall (Shoprite) Airport road, Lugbe,
Abuja.*

Tel: 07062320023

Email: osinowo.k@arfh-ng.org, kosinowo2@yahoo.com,

kehindeosinowo2@gmail.com, info@arfh-ng.org

skype:kehinde.osinowo1