



Zihi
Institute

Youth Safeguarding and Meaningful Engagement **Policy**

Youth Safeguarding and Meaningful Engagement Policy

Organization	Zihi Institute
Policy Name	Youth Safeguarding and Meaningful Engagement Policy
Policy Category	Ethical Engagement and Compliance Policies
Policy Reference Number	ECP 003

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	3
3. Purpose of the Policy	3
4. Legal and Policy Frameworks	3
4.1 National Laws and Policies:	3
4.2 International Frameworks:	4
5. Definition of Youth	4
6. Principles of Youth Safeguarding and Engagement	4
7. Youth Safeguarding Measures	5
7.1 Safe Recruitment Practices	5
7.2 Codes of Conduct	5
8. Meaningful Youth Engagement	6
8.1 Participation in Decision-Making	6
9. Roles and Responsibilities	6
9.1 Management Board:	6
9.2 Executive Leadership Team:	6
9.3 Staff and Volunteers:	6
9.4 Youth Participants:	6
10. Conclusion	6
11. Acknowledgment	6
12. Review and Amendments	7
13. Approval	7

1. Introduction

Zihi Institute (hereinafter referred to as "the Organization") is a registered non-profit entity in Kenya committed to upholding the rights and well-being of young people. This Youth Safeguarding and Meaningful Engagement Policy ("this Policy") outlines the Organization's commitment to ensuring the protection, welfare, and active participation of youth in all aspects of our operations, in compliance with the legal frameworks and provisions within Kenya, as well as international treaties and best practices.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, board members, and consultants associated with the Organization.
- All programs, projects, and activities implemented by the Organization.
- All young people engaged in the Organization's initiatives, whether as beneficiaries, partners, or stakeholders.
- All partner organizations and contractors that work with or on behalf of the Organization.

3. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Establish clear guidelines for safeguarding youth from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.
- Promote meaningful and inclusive engagement of young people in decision-making and program implementation.
- Ensure compliance with national and international legal frameworks and standards on child protection and youth engagement.
- Foster a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for all youth, particularly marginalized groups.

4. Legal and Policy Frameworks

This Policy aligns with the following legal and regulatory frameworks:

4.1 National Laws and Policies:

- The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 (Articles 53 and 55 on children's and youth rights)
- The Children Act, 2022
- The Sexual Offences Act, 2006
- The Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2010
- The Basic Education Act, 2013
- The National Youth Policy, 2019
- The Employment Act, 2007
- The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, 2015
- The Data Protection Act, 2019
- The Public Benefit Organizations Act, 2013

4.2 International Frameworks:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- UNICEF and WHO guidelines on child safeguarding and youth participation
- The ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour

5. Definition of Youth

According to the National Youth Policy, 2019, and the Constitution of Kenya, a youth is defined as any person between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The Organization aligns with this definition while recognizing the needs of young people below 18 who require safeguarding measures under the Children Act, 2022.

6. Principles of Youth Safeguarding and Engagement

The Organization upholds the following principles in alignment with the Constitution of Kenya (Article 53), the UNCRC, and the ACRWC:

- **Best Interest of the Child:** (Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya, UNCRC Article 3) All actions and decisions will prioritize the welfare and well-being of young people.
- **Do No Harm:** (UNCRC General Principles, ACRWC Article 4) We commit to preventing any potential harm resulting from our programs and interventions.
- **Youth Participation:** (National Youth Policy, 2019, UNCRC Article 12) We recognize young people as key stakeholders and actively involve them in decision-making.
- **Non-Discrimination:** (Constitution of Kenya, Article 27, UNCRC Article 2) We ensure equal opportunities and protection for all youth regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, or socio-economic status.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** (Public Benefit Organizations Act, 2013) Clear reporting and accountability structures will be maintained.
- **Confidentiality:** (Data Protection Act, 2019) All safeguarding concerns will be handled with strict confidentiality and professionalism.

7. Youth Safeguarding Measures

7.1 Safe Recruitment Practices

The Organization shall implement strict recruitment processes, including:

- Reference checks with past employers.
- Criminal background checks for staff and volunteers.
- Mandatory safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers.

- Signing of safeguarding and child protection agreements.

7.2 Codes of Conduct

All personnel must adhere to a safeguarding code of conduct that prohibits:

- Any form of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect).
- Exploitation of youth for personal gain.
- Engaging in inappropriate relationships with youth.
- Unauthorized use of youth images or information.

8. Meaningful Youth Engagement

Participation in Decision-Making

The Organization commits to ensuring youth participation through:

- Youth advisory boards.
- Involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Providing platforms for youth voices in policy development.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Management Board:

- Provide strategic oversight and ensure policy compliance.

9.2 Executive Leadership Team:

- Implement safeguarding and engagement measures effectively.

9.3 Staff and Volunteers:

- Adhere to safeguarding protocols and promote meaningful engagement.

9.4 Youth Participants:

- Actively participate and report any safeguarding concerns.

10. Conclusion

The Organization is committed to upholding the highest standards of youth safeguarding and engagement. All stakeholders are encouraged to support the implementation of this Policy to create a safe and inclusive environment for young people.

11. Acknowledgment

By signing any terms of reference, agreement, contract or any other engagement with the organization, all staff, board members, and stakeholders acknowledge understanding and commitment to this policy.

12. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or as necessary to accommodate changes in the operating environment. Amendments will be approved by the Executive Director and the Management Advisory Board.

13. Approval

Approved by:

Daniel Waruingi



Executive Director, Zihi Institute



Zihi
Institute

Youth Safeguarding and Meaningful Engagement **Policy**