

Children and Youth Relief Organizations (CYRO)



CYRO

Children and Youth Relief Organization

"Building Dreams and transforming Lives"

SAFEGUARDING MANUAL

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Introduction and Background

The Children and Youth Relief Organization (CYRO) is a dynamic and dedicated nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. Originally established in September 2021 under the name Yatim Orphan Care Organization (YOCO), the organization rebranded in August 2024 to reflect its expanded focus on providing holistic support to both children and youth. CYRO's core belief is that empowering the younger generation is a key to fostering sustainable development and peace. The organization addresses issues such as child protection, youth development, peacebuilding, and social inclusion, aligning its work with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CYRO partners with local communities, government agencies, and international bodies to create an environment where children and youth can thrive and contribute positively to society.

VISION

CYRO envisions a world where every child and young person is safe, empowered, and able to lead a fulfilling life, contributing to a peaceful and prosperous society. We aspire to be a leading organization in advancing child and youth rights, fostering community resilience, and promoting sustainable development in the Somali Region of Ethiopia and beyond.

MISSIONS

CYRO's mission is to empower and protect children and youth by providing comprehensive support, advocacy, and development opportunities. We are committed to fostering sustainable growth, promoting peace and reconciliation, and ensuring that every child and young person in our community has access to the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

Legal Status

CYRO is a legally registered FDRE Authority of Civil Society Organization (ACSO) operating in Ethiopia. This registration allows the organization to work within legal frameworks, enhancing credibility and expanding its reach through partnerships and international collaboration.

4.1 CYRO's Values:

1. Integrity: CYRO value honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior in all its operations.
2. Empowerment: CYRO focus on empowering individuals or communities, providing them with the tools, resources, or support they need to succeed.

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3. Accountability: CYRO prioritize being accountable to its Staff, stakeholders, and the public, ensuring responsible use of resources and delivering on their commitments.
4. Collaboration: CYRO emphasize the importance of working together with stakeholders, and partners to achieve common goals.
5. Diversity and Inclusion: CYRO value diversity in terms of people's backgrounds, perspectives, experiences, and work towards creating an inclusive environment for all.
6. Advocacy & Sustainability: CYRO value advocating for the interests, rights, or causes they represent, striving to make a positive impact on society, and sustainable practices, aiming to minimize their environmental impact and promote social and economic sustainability.

CYRO upholds international humanitarian Principles:

- HUMANITY
- IMPARTIALITY
- NEUTRALITY
- INDEPENDENCE
- VOLUNTARY SERVICE
- CORE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Working with stakeholders

CYRO is dedicated to networking with other NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, media groups, and concerned stakeholders. Networking with other organizations has always proved very productive by playing as a medium between the service providers and those at the receiving end. Networking provides an opportunity for looking at the issues from different angles i.e., from local, national, and finally at the regional level. At every level, the perspective of the issue changes, which then helps in comprehending the issue. CYRO plans to join at least two main clusters (protection youth) and will be active in these two clusters in the region and at the national level. CYRO has collected and stored the stories and information of victims in order help connect victims with human rights organizations, aid agencies and the regional government.

Board Functions

How does CYRO board function? What does it do? CYRO board sets the policies and strategies for the organization in line with the agreed purposes, principles, and scope of the organization. It also sets operational guidelines, work plans and budgets for the organization and policy and program support. The board assists the internal workings of the CYRO and or the Executive Director by setting criteria for membership of, and appointing, review panels and/or support groups. It may also establish a framework for monitoring and periodically independent evaluation of performance and financial accountability of activities supported by the organization. CYRO has a bylaw that governs what the board of directors' role is, and it should always abide by when they meet and make decisions that may affect the operational structure of the organization. This writing is not by law or does not constitute policy. It is a general description of what CYRO board does and how it functions. One of its main roles is representing the organization within the community.

It represents views of CYRO in various constituencies, or within the organization's members in relation to outside CYRO. Often, the Board is the first contact that NGO's target audience has, and in some cases, it is the first contact where peoples' concerns are actually heard - due to the high standing of Board members in the community. The Board's presence in the field sometimes forces decision-makers to listen to affected people's concerns and can help to open up alternative solutions. Within the board set-up itself, CYRO is a board managed institute. The board members select and appoint the chairperson for the board and also participate in committees and working groups of the organization. CYRO Board of Directors meet Quarterly but can meet as per the bylaw more than once if the situation calls for an immediate meeting.

Advocacy

CYRO advocacy is achieving better results in the field of social/rural/urban/community and development, CYRO also believes in advocacy and therefore, the management has always strongly advocated for the issues related to CYRO. For achieving this objective, CYRO through its strong advocacy as approached the line departments of Government of Somali Region, NGOs, CBOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), members of the community, notables and ASV Shas always promoted the right based approach and supported the dialogue as an important tool for achieving the above-mentioned objectives. This objective requires active participatory in cluster meetings both at regional and national clusters which CYRO plays a greater role.

PART 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

SRVN is committed to providing environment which safeguards anyone who our organisation has contact with, including our program participants, staff, subcontractors, consultants, and other stakeholders. Our organisational culture is one that prioritises safeguarding and ensures anyone who is a victim of an incident or reports an incident are safe and supported.

The purpose of this policy is to protect children, aged, victims of war and torture regardless of their origin, faith, social and economic condition, parent status from exploitation and harm. SRVN has an obligation to ensure its staff is well informed all forms of child protection and appropriate mechanisms to report such acts.

To comply with our Safeguarding Policy, each office and sub-office should have a dedicated Safeguarding Focal Point. It is a role that one of the full-time staff members can take on in addition to their programme responsibilities.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to SRVN Ethiopia. In the event organization expands its operation into other countries this policy will be also relevant to apply. It also applies all our staff, volunteers, consultants, visitors, journalists, and individuals who are working on behalf of SRVN. The policy applies collectively all categories mentioned in the scope during at SRVN office as well as outside working hours or outside locations regardless of the place.

PART 2. DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS

According to Ethiopia Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Strategy:

Sexual Exploitation means: Any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual Abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA): The combination of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse acts or incidents. It occurs when people in power or position of trust exploit the vulnerability of the affected communities for sexual purposes. It is important to note that consent does not determine whether SEA has occurred or not because victims or survivors of SEA have unequal power status with their perpetrators and as a result, they may feel forced to agree (to receive food, to protect their families, etc.).

Sexual Harassment versus SEA: SEA occurs against a beneficiary or vulnerable member of the community, while sexual harassment occurs when one employee makes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favour, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, to another employee, against his or her wishes.

GBV versus SEA: Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is a form of GBV. As such, it is recommended that response services for survivors of SEA should be provided in line with the existing GBV response services. On the other hand, reporting of GBV incidents or seeking GBV services is dependent on the survivor's consent. However, reporting of SEA incidents is not a choice but a mandate and must be done in a confidential and safe manner.

Victim/survivor: A person who has SEA perpetrated against him/her or an attempt to perpetrate SEA against him/her. Both terms are often used interchangeably, however some prefer to use 'victim' as opposed to 5 Derived from IASC definitions, 'survivor' from an access to justice viewpoint. For this document, persons who report SEA committed against themselves are treated as 'survivors' for the security and SEA related needs assessments.

Child: is defined as someone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of majority/consent in country.

Subject of the Complaint (SOC): Once a complaint has been filed, the alleged perpetrator of SEA is referred to as the Subject of the Complaint.

Complainant: Person who brings an allegation of SEA to attention in accordance with established procedures. The complainant may be a SEA survivor or another person who is aware of the wrongdoing. This person may be a SEA survivor or another person who is aware of the wrongdoing. Both the survivor and the complainant, if different from the survivor, should be protected from retaliation for reporting SEA.

PART 3: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENTS SRVN SAFEGUARDING APPROACH

The implementation of this safeguarding will help SRVN TO recognize and respond to abuses, the right people to work and volunteer with children and prevent and respond to bullying both physical and online

- In SRVN everyone has responsibility for safeguarding.
- Do no harm: SRVN commits it is programs & staffs does not cause harm to the vulnerable person of concerns.
- SRVN have a safeguarding duty of care to beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers, including children and vulnerable adults in the community who are not direct beneficiaries but may be vulnerable to abuse.
- SRVN is determined to act with integrity, be transparent and accountable.
- Our culture is embedded All activity is done in the best interests of the child/vulnerable person.
- All children shall be treated equally, irrespective of race, gender, religion/or none, sexual orientation, or disability.
- SRVN works with children and vulnerable adults and victims of wars. Safeguarding is at the heart of our promotional communications and fundraising activities.

PART 4. KEEPING PROJECT BENEFICIARIES SAFE FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND HARASSMENT

Keeping our beneficiaries safe from SEA is aligned with the UN and its partners in Ethiopia's commitment to have a zero-tolerance policy on all aspects of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). SRVN safeguarding policy of our beneficiary puts in place to actively prevent and respond to incidents of SEA by our staff, partners and affiliated personnel. To ensure effective safeguarding policy SRVN commits all stakeholders know our safeguarding policies and procedures to protect the children and vulnerable people at their disposal.

SRVN has Zero Tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse as part of our internal policy. This safeguarding policy also equally prohibits any form of sexual harassment. Our program beneficiaries will be provided clear procedures and instruction on how to report SEA and sexual harassment.

STAFF TRAINING AND AWARENESS.

All staffs, contractors, and external consultants and anyone working on behalf of SRVN are obliged to abide this safeguarding policy.

All staffs, contractors, and external consultants will be provided induction training on the safeguarding policy immediately after they join the organization.

The policy will be mainstreamed any project launching/kick off to reinforce program specific mitigations and risks.

Information regarding SRVN safeguarding policy and relevant procedures will be displayed all SRVN premises and offices.

All program identification and designs will be included safeguarding to ensure all projects identify risks and mitigation mechanisms relevant to safeguarding.

Child safeguarding specific training will be provided all SRVN staff, volunteers, and external consultants.

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Criminal exploitation and gangs
- Domestic abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Non-recent abuse
- Online abuse

PROCESS TO CHECK STAFF DURING RECRUITMENT

SRVN Human resource department will conduct in-depth reference checks for all staff & people who are having assignment with the organization.

During recruitment process (Interviews) we will include specific questions regarding safeguarding to ensure the candidate has zero tolerance approach for abuses and exploitations.

SRVN will rigorously ask all reference checks to raise if there is any concerns regarding safeguarding and conduct of the candidate

STANDARD ETHICS WHILE CONDUCTING RESEARCH.

SRVN will uphold standard protocols while conducting assessments, research, and interviews. safety and rights of the individuals will be ensured to avoid any harm due to the consequence of the tasks being performed.

All staff, consultants and partners who are working on behalf of SRVN should ask consents while interviewing beneficiaries as well as non-beneficiaries.

All staff, consultants and volunteers who are working on behalf of SRVN should proceed interviews and other interactions with only after they get affirmative from the respondents.

Before taking any photos written and signed consent should be duly filled. Any pictures with children (under 18Yrs) should be obtained parent consent. An explanation of how the photo/video will be used should be provided to those providing consent.

PART 5. REPORTING AND CASE HANDLING

In the event incidents arise SRVN has clear procedures to handle properly any allegations including reporting lines. All cases related to exploitation and abuse will be taken seriously. Special attention will be given allegations against sexual abuse and gender-based violations. The cases will be handled with utmost care, sensitivity, and confidentiality. The main objective of reporting and handling cases is to always ensure and keep children and vulnerable people safe.

REPORTING LINES AND PROCEDURES

1. First line reporting: Country safeguarding officer/focal point: All allegations and breaches of SRVN safeguarding policy should be reported directly to the safeguarding focal point in charge of all safeguarding related cases. In this case, _____ is the focal point for any safeguarding issues.
2. Second line reporting: The second line for reporting breach of policy will be the HR representative of the organization.
3. Investigating allegations: A committee comprising the SG focal point, HR representative, the executive director, Operation director will meet and discuss the allegation. The committee will assign investigator who on behalf of the committee lead the investigation.
4. The nominated investigator will collect all evidence related to the allegation. The investigator should communicate individuals/victim making the allegation, individual suspected and those individuals deemed of the allegation to collect enough evidences. The timeline of the investigation will depend of the severity and complexity of the case. Based on the preliminary findings SRVN will fully or partially suspend the individuals being investigated. If remarkable evidence presented the committee will suspend the individual. Strong mechanism and confidentiality will be put in place to ensure avoiding harm or retaliation against the person who filled the allegation.
5. In the event the case is associated with sexual abuse the case will be referred to senior management team to take disciplinary action.
6. All records related to cases will be strictly recorded in a secure place.
7. The alleged individual has the right to fill appeal if he/she has reservations of the outcome of the investigation. The appeal should be in written and submitted within one week. The appeal will be reviewed by someone outside the committee and investigator most probably someone from SRVN Board of directors.
8. In the case, the allegation is not perpetrated by SRVN staff, consultant or partner. The case will be reported to relevant authority.
9. Disciplinary procedures: In the event, it is proven the abuse from SRVN employee, contractor or consultant or nay working on behalf of SRVN their contract will be terminated immediately.

FEEDBACK TO BENEFICIARIES, AUTHORITIES, PEOPLE OF CONCERNED TO THE RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION.

SRVN will provide feedback regarding the progress of any allegations to all parties who might have potential effect. Where necessary and pertinent SRVN will the evidence to law enforcing authorities including state/federal police.