



**Consortium of Self help group Approach  
Promoters (CoSAP)  
Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy  
(Revised)**

March/2020

Addis Ababa Ethiopia

# Consortium of Self-help group Approach Promoters

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## SECTION I: Brief organizational background

The consortium of Self-help group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) is a network of SHG promoting organizations in Ethiopia. CoSAP is re-registered in accordance with Civil Society Organizations proclamation no. 1113/2019 with registration number 1590.

The Vision of CoSAP is to see vibrant peoples` institutions in Ethiopia. The mission of CoSAP is to work towards enhanced capacity of its member organizations to create vibrant women`s institutions in Ethiopia through capacity building, resource mobilization, partnership, networking, research and documentation. The values of CoSAP include Responsiveness, transparency, Accountability, professionalism, Respect social values and Learning.

Currently CoSAP has twenty eight legally registered member organizations that support women to be organized into self- help groups (SHG) in Afar, Amhara, Benshangul Gumuz, Oromia, Somali, Southern Nations Nationalities and people`s regional states and Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations.

Organizationally CoSAP has three governance structures. The highest body of CoSAP is the General Assembly, which currently are the twenty eight member organizations. Elected from the General Assembly, The board of Directors is composed from member organizations. The board provides strategic directions to the secretariat. Along with the program and finance staff members, the executive director is responsible for the day to day operations and management of the secretariat office of the consortium.

## **SECTION 2: Policy Introduction**

Due to the very nature of its work, CoSAP staffs and members are in contact with communities directly and indirectly in both professional and personnel capacities. CoSAP believes that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from any form of abuse and exploitation is fundamental duty of all staff, representatives and partners.

CoSAP has developed this policy in order to minimize the risk to communities associated with our programs and service delivery process as well as prohibit any inappropriate behavior of our staff members and representatives towards the its target groups. This policy document is supported by relevant local procedure and guidance for its effective implementation.

In particular CoSAP, is also committed to ensure that all its staff and representatives will create an internal environment where

- a) Harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and FGM are totally brought under control and
- b) Violence in all its diverse forms is totally eliminated.

## **Purpose of this Policy**

- To safeguard vulnerable peoples — to safe guard and promote the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults with whom CoSAP engages with and minimize their risk.
- To safeguard CoSAP staffs and representatives — all staffs and members will be clear about how they are expected to behave, respond to and report if they suspect that vulnerable people may be experiencing, or be at risk of abuse.
- To safeguard CoSAP— the organization make clear its commitment to keep vulnerable peoples safe and moves towards best practice.

## **SECTION 3: Policy Statement**

The consortium of Self-help group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) is committed to put in place a policy for prevention, accountability and protection of children and vulnerable adults from harm. Hence representatives of CoSAP including employees, Volunteers, interns, consultants, board members, donors and others who might work with children and vulnerable adults on behalf of the organization are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this commitment and obligation.

CoSAP is committed to safeguarding communities with maximum possible extent from any deliberate or inadvertent actions that come into contact. This responsibility falls up on all our staff and representatives and formulated in this policy.

The policy requires:

- Everyone associated with CoSAP to be fully aware of the problem and risks of abuse and any forms of violation.

All representatives of CoSAP must demonstrate the highest standards of Behavior towards vulnerable peoples both in their private and professional lives. They must not abuse the position of trust that comes with being a part of CoSAP. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to such issues.

- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and exploitation will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately as per the local responding procedure.
- All activities and programs are assessed and potential risks to communities are reduced, mitigated or removed.
- CoSAP has a zero tolerance approach to child and vulnerable adult's abuse and sexual exploitation of children by staff, members and representatives.

#### **SECTION 4: scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to:

**Staff:** refer to employee who are full time, part time or intern;

**Representatives:** refer to a range of paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support the organization. This includes consultants, researchers, donors, Board members contractors, Interns, volunteers, incentive workers, rental drivers, etc. ;

**Visitors:** refer to a range of persons who are visiting CoSAP programs and may come into contact with adults and children, This includes journalists, media people, Partners , government and development partners.

Vulnerable peoples at risk in CoSAP line of work should be made aware of CoSAP`s safeguarding policy and procedures. Those with specific communication needs because of language or disability should access this policy and information on same in appropriate forms to ensure their understanding. This

policy relates to all children and adults that CoSAP has direct or indirect contact with and whom that need to be safe guarded from harm.

## **SECTION 5: Definition of Terms and concepts**

**CoSAP /the organization:** refers to the Consortium of Self-help group Approach promoters.

**The Policy:** refers to the child and adult at risk safeguarding policy of CoSAP.

**Member organization:** are the legally registered organizations that are members of CoSAP network.

**Safeguarding:** Refers to the action that is taken to protect children and adult at risk from harm. Within CoSAP, the term refers to internal policy, standard practices and procedures to ensure that all people with whom it engages not placed at risk from both intentional and unintentional harm.

**Child:** Is anyone under the age of 18 years.

**Vulnerable Adult/Adult at risk:** Is a person who is 18 years or over, and who is or may be in need of support or care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care or support him/herself against significant harm or series exploitation.

**Harm:** It is the term used to refer to the physical injury that an unintentional process or activity that affect the child and vulnerable adult physically or emotionally.

**Abuse:** is a deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person`s safety, wellbeing and development.

The main categories of abuses as defined by WHO are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect and Negligent Treatment, Sexual Abuse, and Exploitation.

- **Physical Abuse:** involves the use of physical force (intentional or not) to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g. hitting, slapping, using a stick, shaking, pinching and kneeling for extended time.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse:** includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling/insulting, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, and isolation, like locking up a child in a room.

- **Sexual Abuse:** includes all forms of sexual violence. This includes but is not restricted to incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography, and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material.
- **Sexual exploitation:** means any actual or attempted abuse of 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.
- **Economic exploitation:** The use of a child in work and other activities for the benefit of others. This includes but is not limited to child labor, domestic labor, trafficking, child prostitution, child army or the recruitment of children in to the army. It covers a situation that interferes with the child education or to be harmful to the child health or physical, moral or social development.
- **Neglect:** Neglect means the failure of parents or caregivers to meet a child's physical and emotional needs when they have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so or failure to protect her or him from exposure to danger.

**SHG:** refer to self-help groups established /facilitated by member organizations.

**The Director:** Executive director of CoSAP.

**The Board:** refers to the board of Directors of CoSAP.

**Volunteer/Intern:** Any unpaid person over the age of 18 who is invited by CoSAP or a staff or a board member or those who come through an official request from donor agency or academic institutions or other bodies to assist CoSAP in its operations.

**Staff Member:** Any person over the age of 18 and who entered into formal contract with and hold a formal position in CoSAP (including those in probation period and part time assignments).

## **SECTION 6: General Principles and commitment**

CoSAP believes that it is always unacceptable for a person to experience abuse or harm of any kind. Hence it is committed to practice that protects children and vulnerable adults from any form of abuse. The organization recognizes it has duty to safe guard children and vulnerable adults from any harm and ensure that appropriate action is taken when a child or vulnerable adults from any harm and ensure that appropriate action is taken when a child or vulnerable adult has experienced harm while engaging with COSAP. For this, the organization assigned a safe guarding focal person In addition CoSAP elaborates

code of conduct for its staff members to follow highest standards of behavior in their day to day work encounters with children and vulnerable adults.

CoSAP staffs should have awareness on safeguarding issues. This include becoming alert for the possibility of abuse or harm, knowledgeable to recognize abusive or potentially abusive events or set of circumstances, knowing the focal person in CoSAP to raise the concern with and being competent to take the appropriate immediate or emergency action.

If any member of staff has any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult they must report to CoSAP's safeguarding focal person immediately. This may include concerns about a member of staff, a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused and neglected, or a suspicion that an activity is taking place that could place a person at risk. As per the policy, if the focal person believes that there is ground for the concern, she/he must take appropriate action to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult. This may include contacting the relevant local authority or police. In any situation where there is a suspicion of abuse or harm, the welfare needs of the child or vulnerable adult must come first even where there may be a conflict of interest (e.g. where the suspected perpetrator may be a staff member of CoSAP). CoSAP as an organization commits;

**Personal responsibility:** All staffs and representatives of CoSAP must demonstrate highest standards of behavior towards children and vulnerable adults both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote the policy. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns or potential breaches of the policy.

**Accountability:** Address poor practices, challenge potentially abusive behavior and promote best practices. Through strengthening our internal systems, standards and practice we will be more accountable to vulnerable peoples, their families and the community we aim to serve.

Vulnerable peoples should be empowered and made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior and practices and what they can do when there is a problem or a concern. The best way to safeguarding them is empower them to protect themselves.

**Confidentiality:** All Safeguarding concerns/reports/ investigations will be dealt with on a need to know basis and all records will be held securely. Likewise, communication will be confidential and secure.

**Timeliness:** Timely responses are essential and the procedures establish mandatory time limits on reporting and responding to concerns.

**Uniformity:** This policy applies both during, after and in between work hours.

**Partnership:** We will work together with other member organizations and within the wider community for mitigating safeguarding issues.

## **SECTION 7: Responsibilities of CoSAP Management**

Management team is accountable to:

- Ensure that local policy, procedure and relevant practical orientation guidance are developed for staff, representatives and members for capacity building as required.
- Ensure that all staffs and representatives are clear of what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the abuse or exploitation of vulnerable peoples and risk identified.
- Ensure that all reported cases are appropriately managed timely and fairly according to management procedure.
- Ensure that this policy is integrated with other policies/manuals.
- Ensure that resources needed for the implementation of the policy are identified, and mainstreamed across programs.
- Ensure that safeguarding risks are periodically assessed, managed adequately and inputs are provided as necessary.
- Ensure that safeguarding became an agenda at various level of structure.
- Ensure that lessons learnt in the general implementation of this Policy be used to review policy and develop best practices when appropriate.



## **SECTION 8: Responsibilities of Staff and Representatives**

This policy encourages all staff and representatives to

- Promote a culture of openness in relation to child and adult safeguarding issues, where any issues or concerns can be raised and discussed;
- Be aware of the situation that may present risks, plan and organize the workplace to minimize risks;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior can be challenged;
- Make communities aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, and what they can do if there is a problem;
- Report concerns that a child and adult is a victim of abuse or any forms of exploitation immediately in accordance with the local reporting procedures.
- Undertake induction and training on this policy, which is relevant and appropriate to your position.
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns when needed. Identify and avoid potential situations, which may lead staff behavior misinterpreted.
- Ensure when taking images of children and adults with a manner of ethics and take consent (e.g. photographs and videos Parents/guardian and adults when using for publication and media.)
- Ensure that any image or recorded case history of a child and adult does not place him/her at risk or vulnerable to any form of abuse.

## **SECTION 9: Implementation, monitoring and review**

### **Implementation**

The CoSAP management is responsible for leading the overall implementation of the policy in close collaboration with CoSAP safeguarding focal person.

The management team is responsible for the implementation of the policy compliance as well as facilitating necessary support and creating the managerial environment which enables and facilitates the implementation of all aspects of this policy.

CoSAP safeguarding focal person is responsible to train and orient staffs, volunteers, interns, consultants, board members, and other persons working with or on behalf of CoSAP on this policy. The focal person there by receives feedback, analysis and follow-up cases to learn from the process. In addition general reporting on the implementation of the policy shall be presented to CoSAP management (on quarterly basis) and board of directors biannually). Through this process new insights and inputs shall be collected as appropriate and suggestion for review of the policy shall be presented to the board annually.

## **Monitoring**

The management team is responsible for the overall monitoring of policy implementation across their supervision in close collaboration with the safeguarding focal points.

## **Review**

The policy is subject to review as necessary. The management team is responsible for leading the practice of policy review/audit. The lessons learnt that would be highlighted in the practice review will support the review of this policy. The board has final say to decide for revision of the policy based on the reports in received from the office of CoSAP.

## **Consequences of Violation of this Policy**

Any breach of this policy will be investigated and failure to comply with the responsibilities may lead on the following actions:

For CoSAP staff- disciplinary action according to the disciplinary procedure in human resource manual. Where relevant- appropriate legal or other frameworks as per the national laws will be applicable to all.

## **Annex I: Code of Conduct Pledge**

All CoSAP staff are required to understand their responsibility to keeping children and adults safe by abiding on the below code of conduct that outlines the rules of appropriate when working with children and adults. This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list.

I will not

1. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children and vulnerable adults.
2. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years.  
Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
3. Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child and adult at risk of abuse.

4. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
5. Behave physically in a manner which is Child and adult safeguarding inappropriate or sexually provocative.
6. Sleep in the same bed as a child and adult with whom we are working.
7. Participate in, behaviors which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
8. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade vulnerable peoples or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
9. Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favor to particular group to the exclusion of others.
10. Spend excessive time alone with particular target beneficiary away from others.
11. Place myself in a position where I am made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_