



Hunt for Wisdom

Postnet Ste. #38, P. Bag X3008
Hoedspruit, 1380
Limpopo Province, South Africa
Registered NPO # 134-226
Registered PBO # 930045369

ZUT Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct

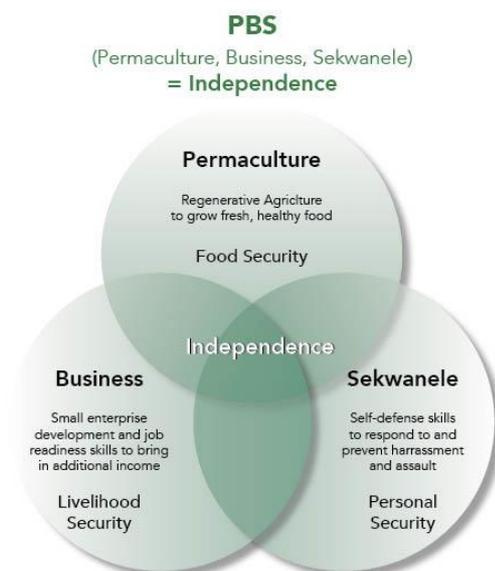
| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Effective Date : | 17 th December 2021 |
| Next Review Date : | 17 th December 2022 |
| Approval / Authorisation : | ZUT Board |

1. INTRODUCTION

Zingela Ulwazi Trust (ZUT) is a Non-Profit Organisation based in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Our mission is to enable access to critical information to improve women and girl's lives, help to build resilience in communities and custodianship of nature in rural South Africa.

Our Vision is a world where women are independent, connected, healthy, joyful, respected and have full participation in the economy and full access to information and technology. A just world, where women's rights are honoured, their lives and bodily integrity and safety treasured. Where women's unique gifts, talents, skills and contribution to healthy, vital communities is valued and held in the highest esteem.

ZUT's objectives are to run training programs for women to address the three 3 elements (in the graphic below) to be independent. Our programs are specifically designed to help women thrive in these three areas, which then benefit families, communities and the environment.



Where children are participating in our programs, we expect all team members, participants and partners to share responsibility for protecting children, acknowledging that children have a right to protection, and that everyone has a part to play in this critical activity, seeing that South Africa is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for women and children. Just as we support participation and feedback from our adult participants, so we welcome full participation and feedback from children, who are shaping our future. ZUT's intention and resolute objective is to behave with and promote integrity at all times, as outlined in the following document.

2. PURPOSE

ZUT has a strong commitment to the safety, wellbeing and protection of children. We aim to safeguard children in the course of our work by promoting circumstances that are consistent with safe and effective care. This enables children to develop with confidence, trust, appropriate care with the future full open to possibilities.

ZUT encourages a culture of open discussion of issues regarding safeguarding and protecting children and the ZUT Child Protection Policy guides our discussions and our decision making. We promote a rights based approach to child protection and have expected standards of behaviour for all ZUT board members, staff and team members, and program participants, based on the Children's Act of 2005. These measures empower our people to be alert to risks, abuse and exploitation of children and to seek guidance and support to respond appropriately. ZUT assesses and manages risk to children in all areas of our business.

ZUT will do everything in our power to prevent child abuse and exploitation.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ZUT's commitment to child protection is informed by the following principles:

- Recognising Children’s Rights: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpins ZUT’s approach to decisions about safeguarding and protecting children.
* *Children are defined as all people under the age of 18 years.*

ZUT will promote children’s rights to life, survival and development; participation; non-discrimination and to have their best interests considered in any decision making.

- The Best Interests of the Child are Paramount: Consideration of what is in the best interests of the child is key in any decision related to our work with children. We will be guided by appropriate laws but our policy may go beyond these (i.e. ZUT will not necessarily be limited in our response to complying with relevant laws).
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children is a Shared Responsibility: It is everyone’s responsibility to maintain vigilance, practice risk management, and to promote optimum life chances for children.
- Zero Tolerance of Child abuse and exploitation.

4. SCOPE / PERSONS AFFECTED

All personnel, program participants and associates must comply with this policy in the course of their work and when representing ZUT.

- ZUT team members
- All ZUT program participants
- ZUT visitors

ZUT workers (defined for the purposes of this policy as: employees, consultants, contractors, office volunteers, interns, the ZUT Board, or anyone engaged to undertake work for the organisation). All of the aforementioned must comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this ZUT Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

This policy covers incidents and risks to children by ZUT board members, staff, program participants or representatives of partner organisations/contractors. Incidents and risks that are the result of actions by members of the community are beyond the scope of this policy.

5. DEFINITIONS

ABUSE Includes:

Physical abuse — the use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning.

Neglect — the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

Emotional Abuse — refers to a parent or caregiver’s inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child, or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child’s self-esteem or social competence.

Sexual abuse — the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexually abusive behaviours can include fondling genitals; masturbation; oral sex; vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object; fondling breasts; voyeurism; exhibitionism; and exposing the child to, or involving the child in, pornography

Ill-treatment — disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate or improper manner; making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child; hostile use of force towards a child; and/or a pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate degrading comments or behaviour towards a child.

Grooming — grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming behaviour is where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child’s involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 CHILD SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

ZUT will take all reasonable steps to ensure all personnel, volunteers and associates have passed screening procedures and do not pose a risk to children participating in our programs. ZUT is directly responsible and will consistently apply robust recruitment procedures for all personnel, program participants and associates:

- Due diligence name check of the National Child Protection Register and the National Sex Offenders Register, by submission of Form 29 to the Department of Social Development
- Verbal Referee Checks: At least two verbal referee checks conducted and documented,
- Behavioural based interview questions: to determine attitudes, motivations, and values with regards to children,
- Sign and comply with this policy and the enclosed ‘Child Protection Code of Conduct for Working and Contact with Children’ (annex 1), as a condition of engagement with ZUT.
A written record of agreement will be retained on file, which includes an agreement to inform ZUT about incidents and risks related to children,
- All employment contracts must contain provisions for potential disciplinary action: including termination of employment following breach of the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct,
- As a condition of partnership, we will expect similar conditions from our partners.

6.2 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

- The ZUT Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct will be available on the ZUT website.
- The ZUT Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct will be translated into local language to ensure accessibility for all personnel, volunteers and associates.
- Children participating in our programs will be made aware of our policy and how to access to child centred incident reporting processes.
- All staff and participants will be made aware of Childline and Department of Social Development GBV Command Centre's services and phone numbers, to utilise or pass on to anyone at risk.

6.3 CHILD PROTECTION IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

ZUT will work in partnership with partner organisations to assist them to develop and fulfill their responsibilities for the safeguarding of children. A range of factors must be carefully considered in order to develop a collaborate partnership which enables a child safeguarding system to be developed and implemented.

6.4 USE OF IMAGES AND MESSAGES

ZUT bases all image gathering and publishing processes on ethical standards, which includes assessment of risk to children; child safety; respect for children's rights, and integrity and dignity. This includes obtaining and documenting informed consent from the child's parent/guardian and, if possible, the child themselves. Children's best interests and protection will be prioritized over opportunities for promotion and advocacy.

ZUT also has a set of expected behaviours when photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes (see annex 1 – Child Protection Code of Conduct).

- Photographic images should be consistent with our approach to safeguarding and protecting children and should avoid damaging stereotypes.
- We will respect the rights of children and their parents/guardians (right to privacy, participation, and right to consent).
- Photography briefing notes for program participants include appropriate information about our safeguarding and protecting children strategy and will reflect best practice standards for external publishing.

7. INCIDENT/RISK REPORTING AND RESPONSE

During the course of our work, team members and program participants or associates may observe incidents where children are at risk, are harmed, or have suspicions or disclosures of child abuse and/or exploitation.

Incidents or risks include:

- An observation or disclosure (by an adult or child) of abuse or exploitation
- An observation or disclosure of potential risk of harm or child abuse
- A breach of the ZUT Child Protection Policy or 'Child Protection Code of Conduct'

- A situation or environment which is working in opposition to, or poses a threat to children's rights
- An observation or disclosure of behaviour which could be considered grooming
- Child exploitation materials that are received on ZUT electronic equipment (this can include, but is not limited to, SPAM, popups, text messages, emails, or social media communications)

Board members, staff or program participants and associates must inform ZUT Management if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at potential risk of harm. A report must be made to management of ZUT when:

- Harm is due to the actions or inactions of a ZUT board member, staff member, partner or program participant, or other associate. Harm is due to the actions of a person representing a ZUT partner organisation or contractor.
- A criminal offence has been committed against a child the matter will be reported to the relevant authorities where the crime was committed.

The report must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident or risk, ZUT staff or program participants and associates must inform one of the following people:

- The relevant ZUT Program Manager and the ZUT Director. Incidents reports will be documented, investigated and responded to.

Strategies for responding to children if they disclose:

The following strategies will help support children if they disclose that they have been harmed or abused:

- Try to keep calm and give the child your attention
- Listen to the child, do not ask leading questions
- Let the child take his or her time to tell what happened
- Reassure the child that it is the right thing to tell
- Let the child use his or her own words to tell
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Let the child know what you will do next
- If the child is injured seek medical attention
- Do not examine the children unless you are a parent or a medical practitioner
- Don't confront the person who has allegedly abused the child (this can endanger the person who reports or the child themselves).

Action to be taken by ZUT management:

ZUT is committed to preventing a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk. Following a formal investigation, a confirmed breach of the Child Protection Policy and 'Child Protection Code of Conduct' may lead to the instigation of performance and disciplinary procedures, which may involve termination of employment for staff or partnership with an organisation.

No action will be taken against any person who informs ZUT in good faith of incidents and risks. However, those who wilfully inform ZUT using false information will be subject to investigation and possible consequences as per disciplinary procedures.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

ZUT will ensure that any incidents or risks will be handled according to the principles of confidentiality, safety, impartiality, procedural fairness, timeliness and accuracy.

All incidents or risks, and the names of people involved, will be handled in the strictest of confidence. Details will only be disclosed on a “need to know” basis, when required by relevant local or South African law, or when a notification to police or appropriate authorities must be made.

9. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- ZUT Code of Conduct
- ZUT HR Policy

10. REFERENCES

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- South African Children’s Act of 2005 :
<https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2005-038%20childrensact.pdf>
- South Africa’s National Child Care and Protection Policy of 2019 :
https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202102/national-child-care-and-protection-policy.pdf
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of people with disabilities.
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

11. REVISION HISTORY

1st Review due 17th December 2022

ANNEX 1 – ZUT Child Protection Code of Conduct for Working and Contact with Children

This Child Protection Code of Conduct/list of expected professional behaviours applies to all personnel volunteers, contractors, ZUT board members and associates of ZUT.

ZUT expects that all people engaged with organisations, programs and activities will abide by the following Code of Conduct in their interactions with children .

I agree:

1. to treat children with respect, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, status, disability, or other status or identity

2. not to use language or behaviour towards children that is abusive, including language or behaviour that is harassing, sexually provocative, shaming, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
3. not to engage a child in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts
4. wherever possible, to ensure that another adult is present when working with children or in contact with children.
5. not to invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
6. not to rest or sleep close to unsupervised children, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children)
7. to use all computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or other technology appropriately, and never exploit or harass children, or access or disseminate child exploitative material through any medium, including social media
8. not to use physical punishment or humiliating punishment on children
9. not to 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
10. to comply with all relevant South African legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
11. to immediately report to ZUT any concerns or allegations of child exploitation, abuse or breach of the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
12. to seek the support of ZUT in any matter where mandatory reporting is required by South African legislation
13. to immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during my association with ZUT
14. to be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.

Note: these behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

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

- take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- obtain informed consent from the child and/or parent or guardian of the child before photographing, recording or filming a child
- provide an explanation of how the photograph or film will be used to the child and their parent or guardian
- not offer or give remuneration or in-kind gifts for taking a photograph or film
- ensure photographs, films, videos, DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Ensure that children are 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, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understood the ZUT Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for Working and Contact with Children. I understand that any breach of the Code of Conduct may result in the termination of my employment, partnership or participation in ZUT's programs according to ZUT's disciplinary procedures or dismissal/removal from the (_____) program and prosecution by the relevant authorities.

Signature: _____

Name in full: _____

Date: _____

Compliance Officer:

Stella Horgan

Zingela Ulwazi Trust Director

stella@zingelaulwazi.org.za 076-885-8168

Policy approved by the Board of Directors on 15th December 2021