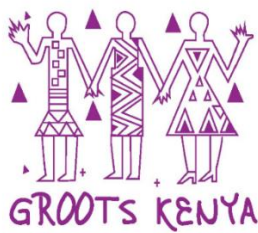


## GROOTS KENYA SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Summarized Version)

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Prepared

by



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## Introduction

At **GROOTS Kenya**, safeguarding means taking all reasonable and proactive steps to prevent harm, abuse, and exploitation particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) before they occur. We are committed to protecting **children, vulnerable adults, our staff, volunteers, partners, and community members** from any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in all areas of our work. We operate a **zero-tolerance** approach to any form of abuse or misconduct. All GROOTS Kenya staff, volunteers, and partners are expected to uphold high standards of behavior and are required to report any safeguarding concerns through our established and confidential reporting mechanisms.

## Purpose

GROOTS Kenya safeguarding policy aims to ensure that GROOTS Kenya activities are implemented in a safe and protective environment where **harm, exploitation and abuse** are effectively **prevented** as far as reasonably possible, and **responded to** effectively.

## Purpose and commitment

GROOTS Kenya is committed to promoting the safety and well-being of children, vulnerable adults, and all individuals working with or for us. As part of commitment, we prioritize good safeguarding practices, ensure everyone understands their responsibilities through appropriate training, and respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns or incidents of abuse. We also provide support to those affected and maintain accurate, confidential, and securely stored records of all safeguarding matters. GROOTS Kenya further conducts annual risk assessments, enforces safeguarding-focused recruitment and screening practices, and continuously raises awareness on safeguarding among staff and communities.

## Definitions of terms

**Child:** The term 'child' has the specific legal meaning of anyone below the age of 18 years.

**Adult:** The term adult therefore refers to anyone aged 18 years or over.

**Adult at risk:** An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who has care and support needs due to their age or frailty, mental or physical health problems, gender, learning or physical disabilities or the impact of disasters and conflicts, and who is unable as a result to protect themselves from harm, exploitation or abuse.

**Associated personnel:** They include Board members, champions, volunteers, interns, contractors, consultants, and associated personnel of partner organizations.

**Physical abuse:** This is the actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing or attempting to cause physical harm to a person.

## Scope of our safeguarding policy

This policy applies to all GROOTS Kenya employees and associated personnel, as well as anyone acting on behalf of the organization who may have direct contact with or authority over children, young people, women, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable adults. This includes members of the Board, staff, champions, program participants, and associated personnel such as volunteers, interns, consultants, partners, sub-grantees, service providers, suppliers, and stakeholders. GROOTS Kenya believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility thus shared roles and responsibility.

## Our Guiding Principles

GROOTS Kenya upholds a set of core safeguarding principles that guide all its operations and relationships. We embrace a **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harassment, ensuring that our programs and interactions are grounded in the “**do no harm**” principle. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we promote **shared accountability** among staff, partners, and communities. We are committed to **equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion**, ensuring the protection of all individuals particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups regardless of their background or identity. Our **survivor-centered approach** prioritizes dignity, safety, and confidentiality for those affected by harm. We **ensure transparent reporting, safe recruitment, regular risk assessments**, and continuous awareness-building to foster a culture of protection and trust across all levels of engagement.

## Code of Conduct summary

GROOTS Kenya prohibits all forms of abuse, exploitation, and misconduct by staff, grassroots champions, and associated personnel. This includes using one's position to demand gifts, money, or favors; taking or sharing photos without consent; using abusive language or behavior; engaging in fraud or corruption; exploiting children through labor or trafficking; and subjecting any individual to physical, emotional, or psychological harm. All services provided by GROOTS Kenya are **free**, and no one should be asked to offer any form of payment or appreciation in return for assistance.

## Policy Statement

GROOTS Kenya's Safeguarding Policy outlines our commitment to protecting children, women, and persons with disabilities, youth, and other vulnerable groups from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harm. The policy applies to all staff, board members, volunteers, partners, service providers, and anyone representing the organization. It includes clear definitions of abuse, guiding principles such as zero tolerance, do no harm, and survivor-centered response, as well as procedures for safe recruitment, regular risk assessments, and capacity building. The policy also establishes confidential and accessible reporting channels, outlines response and case management procedures, and ensures support for survivors while maintaining accountability and continuous learning across all levels of our work.

## Anti-Sexual Harrassment Principles

GROOTS Kenya strictly prohibits staff and associated personnel from exchanging money, goods, employment, or services for sexual activity, including with program participants. Engaging in sexual relationships with program participants is also forbidden due to the inherent power imbalance. All personnel are expected to actively contribute to a safe and respectful environment that upholds the organization's Safeguarding Policy. They are also required to report any concerns or suspicions of safeguarding violations promptly through the appropriate channels.

## Safeguarding Preventive Measures

**GROOTS Kenya takes proactive steps to prevent abuse, exploitation, and safeguarding violations through a range of preventive measures.** These include robust safeguarding policies, codes of conduct, and child-friendly materials. The organization ensures safe recruitment practices, mandatory safeguarding inductions, and continuous staff and partner training to raise awareness. Regular risk assessments are integrated into program design, including work with partners who are expected to adopt safeguarding policies aligned with GROOTS Kenya standards. Safeguarding procedures are also embedded in research, media, and communications, ensuring respectful and consent-based representation of program participants. All consultants, suppliers, and contractors are required to sign safeguarding commitments and demonstrate preventive systems. Additionally, GROOTS Kenya promotes safe, inclusive, and voluntary participation of children and young people in all activities, underpinned by informed consent and a strong commitment to their protection and dignity.

## Reporting and Response Mechanisms

GROOTS Kenya is committed to responding to all safeguarding concerns or incidents with urgency, professionalism, and sensitivity. Upon receiving a report, the designated safeguarding lead will prioritize the **safety, dignity, and well-being** of the survivor, ensuring that any immediate protection or medical needs are addressed without delay.

All reported incidents whether from staff, community members, partners, or program participants will be treated seriously and confidentially, in accordance with our established safeguarding procedures. Where necessary, GROOTS Kenya will collaborate with relevant authorities and service providers (e.g., child protection officers, health services, legal aid, or law enforcement) to ensure comprehensive support and justice for survivors. At all times, the organization adheres to a **survivor-centered approach**, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, non-retaliation, and protection from further harm. GROOTS Kenya will also ensure that all incidents are documented, securely stored, and followed through to resolution, with clear timelines and accountability.

**All safeguarding concerns, suspicions witnessed safeguarding violation by GROOTS Kenya's staff member and associated personnel should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead through telephone (011 726 3248) or via email: [grootsk@grootskenya.org](mailto:grootsk@grootskenya.org).**

## Policy Monitoring and Review

GROOTS Kenya is committed to upholding and respecting the rights of children and young people to live free from harm by creating a safe and protective environment across all its programs. The organization will continuously monitor the implementation of its Safeguarding Policy and guidelines to ensure effectiveness and accountability. To remain responsive and relevant, GROOTS Kenya will also conduct an annual review of the policy and document any necessary amendments to strengthen its safeguarding practices.

**This is a summarized version of our full Safeguarding Policy. To request the complete policy document, please reach out to us on [grootsk@grootskenya.org](mailto:grootsk@grootskenya.org).**