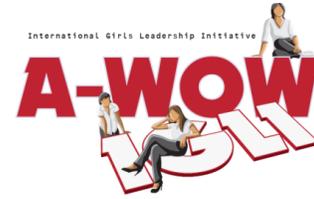




# AWOW CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



In today's society child abuse and child accusations are occurring daily. Therefore it is important that A-WOW Inc. take steps to protect the children to whom we mentor and protect our workers and volunteers from false accusations.

All volunteers and paid workers are required to undergo a national criminal background check and complete a volunteer application process in accordance with A-WOW's Child Protection Policy.

## Introduction

Our mission is to assist girls and young women in assuming active leadership roles in their community by fostering and promoting education, leadership and skill development through training, innovative learning opportunity and facilitating a cross-cultural exchange of ideas through bolstering international relationships and advocating the eradication of female gender inequalities.

We believe that child protection is crucial to ensuring that children under 18 years of age have the rights, confidence and environment in which they can make choices, express their views and communicate effectively with other children and adults. Children cannot become empowered change agents to improve their lives and that of their families and communities if they are not safeguarded from abuse, discrimination and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

While this document relates to the A-WOW Inc., A-WOW International Girls Leadership Initiative and A-WOW Global Initiatives, it will be necessary in the future for all of our international partners to develop a Child Protection Policy that is appropriate to their own culture and legal system (taking into account the universal human rights standards of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

## Definitions

### Child

For the purposes of this policy, a "child" is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

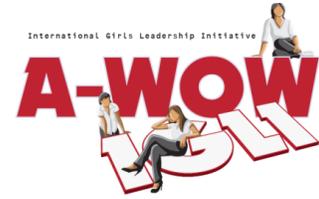
### Child abuse

According to the World Health Organization, "Child abuse" or "maltreatment" constitutes 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

"Cruelty to children" or "child abuse" -behavior that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child. All forms of cruelty are damaging – it can be harder to recover from the emotional impact than from the physical effects.



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These definitions therefore point to four types of cruelty:

**Physical abuse:** including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.

**Sexual abuse:** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities.

**Emotional abuse:** repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.

**Neglect:** the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.

A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty.

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally.

## **Child protection**

Child protection is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

### **Direct contact with children**

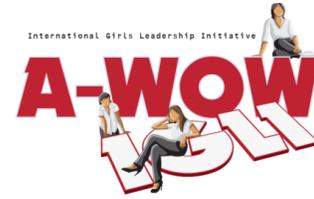
Being in the physical presence of a child or children, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term. In the US this could involve delivering talks to schools, churches and youth groups. Overseas this could involve project/site visits and attending conferences at which children are also present.

### **Indirect contact with children**

- ❖ Having access to information on children, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.
- ❖ Providing funding for organizations that work 'directly' with children.



# AWOW CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



## Partner

For the purposes of this policy:

- ❖ An overseas organization that receives funding from or on the behalf of A-WOW Inc., whether funding is occasional or regular, short or long term, for a specific project or towards core costs and regardless of the amount of money involved.
- ❖ An overseas organization involved in project work with A-WOW Inc., whether the project relationship is short or long term, a one-off or regular/ongoing arrangement, and regardless of whether or not any funding is involved.

## Policy

‘A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.’

### A-WOW Inc., core child protection principles and values

The moral basis – a non-negotiable duty: A-WOW Inc. believes that NGOs working for street children’s rights have an absolute duty to protect this already vulnerable group from abuse, mistreatment, and exploitation from within organizations intended for their benefit.

This duty is imperative and non-negotiable. Without adequate standards and mechanisms of protection in place, an organization is not only failing in its primary duty of care, but may also be negligently or recklessly fostering an environment of abuse.

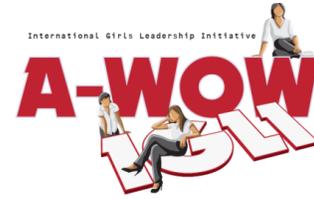
### An end to silence:

Silence breeds abuse and exploitation of children. Pedophiles will seek out organizations with weak communication structures and thrive where secrecy and shame prevail. Furthermore, without proper policies and explicit procedures in place, NPOs/NGOs are extremely vulnerable to false allegations of child abuse. A-WOW Inc. therefore believes in:

- ❖ Creating an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults;
- ❖ Promoting open lines of communication both internally and externally within and between organizations to improve awareness and implementation of child protection policies and practices;
- ❖ Creating a framework to deal openly, consistently and fairly with allegations concerning both direct and indirect abuse.



# AWOW CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Children’s participation – a space and a voice: Creating a space where children feel able and willing to speak out about abuse, free from abusers, empowers them to become actors in their own protection without further discrimination or shame. “Children have the right to receive information, to ask questions, to make choices, and to make decisions.

Communication – to enable them to Child-to-Child believes that helping children to find a voice is an essential step to helping them to claim their individual rights. Children will only benefit from this policy if they are aware of their rights and are given the proper environment in which to exercise them.

## **A-WOW Child Protection Policy**

### **Staff and Personnel**

As a condition of working with our organization, all employees, officers, staff, interns, volunteers, and advisers of A-WOW Inc. required to undergo the following:

- ❖ Satisfactory clearance through a police check conducted by the Criminal Records Bureau.
- ❖ Both acceptance of and commitment to our Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for working with children.
- ❖ Signing a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions.
- ❖ Providing the name and contact information of two character references they have known for no less than two years, excluding family members.

### **Behavior Protocols**

Any employee, officer, staff member, intern, volunteer, consultant, or advisor who has direct contact with children either in the US or overseas will be fully informed of A-WOW’s Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate behavior of adults towards children and of children towards children.

Items prohibited include, but are not limited to:

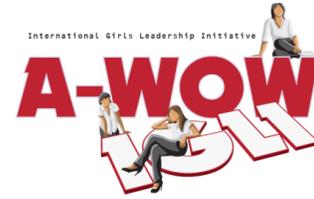
- ❖ Drugs
- ❖ Alcohol
- ❖ Sex or intimate relations with any participating A-WOW Ambassadors
- ❖ Pets - although I am a pet lover let be mindful of those who are not interested

Smoking is prohibited inside facilities or near entrances or exits. There will be a fee assessed for smoking inside.

Registered sex offenders are not permitted to chaperone or live in housing with participants.



# AWOW CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



## Rules of Conduct

All individual directly and indirectly with A-WOW Inc Summit shall comply with all laws of the United States and the State of Texas, all ordinances of the county and city, rules and regulations.

- ❖ Keep it Clean. Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.
- ❖ Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.
- ❖ Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.
- ❖ Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.
- ❖ Be Proactive. 'Report' and let us know of abuse.

## Communications about Children

All publications and the website that include images and text related to children will not contain the following:

- ❖ Manipulated or sensationalized text and/or images
- ❖ Discriminatory and degrading language
- ❖ Images in which children are inappropriately clothed
- ❖ Information that could be used to identify the location of the child and cause them to be put at risk.

Photos of children that will be included on the website or any of our publications must be taken with the child's verbal permission. In addition, all information relating to children is limited to those members of staff who need to know and will be treated as confidential.

## Reporting Incidents

All witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of the Child Protection Policy will be immediately reported to the designated Child Protection Officer, who will record and act on these in a confidential manner in accordance with the standardized process developed by A-WOW Inc., and the best interests of the child. The Child-to-Child Trust will take appropriate action to protect the child/children in question from further harm and others in the organization during and following an incident or allegation.

## Ramifications of Misconduct

We will immediately suspend any employee, adviser, consultant, trustee, intern or volunteer who is alleged to have violated the Child Protection Policy, pending the outcome of an investigation. A-WOW Inc. reserves the right to take any disciplinary action against any of the above who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to the police.