

RWANDA MEN'S RESOURCE CENTER (RWAMREC)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



RWANDA MEN'S RESOURCE CENTER (RWAMREC)

P.O. Box 5768, Kigali, Rwanda
Kimironko, Yyusa Plaza

Telephone: +250788381183/+250788315140

Email: info@rwamrec.org

Website: www.rwamrec.org



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WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) is a non-government organization striving to achieve gender equality through the promotion of positive masculinities and male engagement approaches in preventing gender-based violence (GBV) in Rwanda. RWAMREC was founded in 2006 by nine members and was legally established in 2008 by the Ministerial Order no. 114/11 of 3/9/2008. The organization was formed as a response aimed at seeing men become part of the solution and efforts in ending men's violent behaviors. With this concept, the organization worked to change masculinity norms of men and boys to become positive and supportive partners in promoting gender equality in Rwanda.

The creation of RWAMREC was also triggered by the fact that gender promotion work was misunderstood as purely women's affairs, with men tending to exclude themselves, and some feeling that they were being disempowered by gender equality on detriment of women. This resulted in some men standing in the way of or blocking women's empowerment efforts in many ways in trying to protect their masculinities. RWAMREC's answer was to bring men together to understand that they too benefit from women's empowerment and are part of gender equality promotion work and benefits.

Since its founding, RWAMREC has transitioned from a small local organization to a nationally active non-governmental organization with programs in 24 districts spread over 4 provinces of Rwanda. Since its inception the primary focus of the organization continues to be promoting positive masculinity and the reduction of violence against women and children by men. RWAMREC operates in 24 districts of Rwanda to promote gender equality and to fight against sexual and gender-based violence. This procurement policy will help RWAMREC to effectively execute its procurement procedures in transparent ways.

Venant NZABONIMANA

Chairman



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Abbreviations

CLADHO: Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Defense des Droits de l'Homme

CNF: National Women's Council

EACSO: East Africa Civil Society Organizations Forum

EIGE: European Institute of Gender Equality

FFRP: RwandaForum for Women Parliamentarians

GBV: Gender Based Violence

GEF: Global Environment Facility

GMO: Gender Monitoring Office

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICRW: International Center for Research on Women

MIGEPROFE: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

NGP: National Gender Policy

NGOs: Non Governmental Organizations

PTCs: Parents and Teachers' Committees

RBC: Rwanda Biomedical Center

RWAMREC: Rwanda Men' Resource Center

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

VSL: Voluntary Savings and Loans



About Rwanda Men's Resource Center

RWAMREC History

Founded in 2006, Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) put forward its vision to create a "peaceful society where women and men share roles and responsibilities of raising families and governing society in equality and respect."

The idea for RWAMREC was born when a police report was released in 2005, which revealed shockingly high statistics on the number of rapes being committed across Rwanda. Men are evidently involved in, and responsible for, the vast majority of incidences of sexual violence in the country. However, efforts aimed at promoting gender equality and tackling violence against women has frequently assumed gender promotion to be a women's issue and men have often been excluded and disempowered. As a result of such exclusion, men have become one of the primary obstacles hindering efforts to empower women and achieve gender equality. Men's engagement in gender promotion, especially in efforts to end gender-based violence, is a missing link in gender responsive development agendas in Rwanda.

So, a group of nine like-minded men, who met regularly to discuss social and development issues, decided to combat these worrying trends. Their aim was to transform the traditional, negative definitions of masculinity that perpetuate gender-based violence. Thus, RWAMREC was created to proactively engage men in the promotion of positive masculine behaviors, encouraging them to support women's empowerment and play a constructive role in ending gender-based violence. The objective is to empower men to rid themselves of the negative perceptions of masculinity that have burdened them for so long. Such empowerment can liberate men from the behavioral and attitudinal constraints imposed by socio-cultural norms, enabling them to become positive role models for other men and boys.

RWAMREC Vision

RWAMREC envisages a peaceful society where women and men share roles and responsibilities of raising families and governing society in equality and respect of human rights.

RWAMREC Mission

RWAMREC's distinctive and innovative mission focuses on mobilizing Rwandan men to support women's leadership; to contribute to the eradication of men's violence against women; and to serve as role models for the promotion of positive masculine behaviors. Building alliances and partnerships with women's organizations to promote women's rights and interests is central.

RWAMREC Objectives

1. To establish a men's resource centre that will strive to prevent GBV within Rwanda through MenEngage-focused Approaches.
2. To promote men's attitudes and behaviours towards non-GBV and gender equality within Rwanda.
3. To build synergy among men and women through networking and information sharing for effective GBV prevention.
4. To facilitate dialogue among strategic actors for effective advocacy surrounding gender issues.
5. To provide general and useful resources through research on masculinity and GBV.

RWAMREC Motto

"Men working with men to promote gender equality" in Rwanda.

Partnership

RWAMREC is an active member of ProfemmeTweseHamwe (an umbrella organization comprised of 58 women's development and rights organizations in Rwanda); the CLADHO (an umbrella human rights group in Rwanda comprised of 8 organizations), the East African Civil Society Organizations Forum (EACSOFF); the GBV Prevention Network working in the Horn, East and Southern Africa; MenEngage Africa and the Global MenEngage Alliance; and the Global Peace Initiative Network.

RWAMREC also enjoys a sound partnership with institutions of the Government of Rwanda such as the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the Ministry of Health through the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), the Gender monitoring Office (GMO), the National Women's Council (CNF),

the National Police, the Rwanda Defense Forces' gender desks and the Rwanda Forum for Women Parliamentarians (FFRP). Moreover, RWAMREC works with numerous UN Agencies and international organizations such as Promundo, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), the United Nations (UN) Population Fund, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UNDP, and the UN Trust Fund.

RWAMREC Achievements

Some of the major achievements of RWAMREC include its successful lobbying for the inclusion of masculinity issues in Rwanda's National Gender Policy (NGP). The organization has also played a key role in the development of a national policy against gender-based violence in Rwanda. Other achievements include RWAMREC's coordination of the first national household survey in Rwanda on perceptions of masculinity and GBV. Using this survey, RWAMREC in collaboration with the Rwanda MenEngage Network (composed of 46 government and civil society organizations), produced the September 2010 report entitled 'Masculinity and GBV in Rwanda: Experiences and Perceptions of Men and Women'. RWAMREC has conducted numerous community mobilization campaigns in 6 districts, aimed at promoting positive masculine behaviors and preventing GBV by involving local leaders. Coffee cooperatives have also been established in 2 districts and Voluntary Savings and Loan Schemes (VSL) in six districts (in collaboration with CARE international) as well as radio spots and talk shows.



Policy Statement

Core to RWAMREC's aims is ending gender-based violence in all its forms, against children as well as adults, girls and boys. In many of its projects, for example in those in schools, it is working with children to have a positive impact on their lives, and in order to do so it seeks to put the children themselves at the centre of these projects.

However, as an organization working with children, RWAMREC must also ensure that its work does not cause harm to children inadvertently, through the intentional or unintentional actions or inactions of RWAMREC staff and others working on its projects.

Furthermore, as RWAMREC seeks to enhance its effectiveness by managing its work with its stakeholders via a program-based approach, rather than project-by-project, the risk of harm being caused to children is one of a number of key risks that need to be actively managed, in order to maximize overall effectiveness and accountability to all, and children themselves in particular.

RWAMREC has always had a variety of policies and procedures aimed at avoiding causing harm to children. The child protection policy presented in this document brings these together to provide greater clarity to RWAMREC organs, employees, interns, volunteers and stakeholders'. An important part of a child protection policy is that all staff and any others representing RWAMREC understand that policy. Specifically, RWAMREC believes in the following as far as child protection is concerned:

- Child abuse encompasses the abuse of children's rights;
- Children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation;
- Children protection must be taken care of through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation;
- Child abuse is never acceptable and tolerable;
- RWAMREC is committed to protecting children relentlessly;
- Contribution of governing bodies, all staff and partners should be at stake as far as child protection is concerned;
- RWAMREC aspires and requests that all partners should meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

Scope of the Policy



Under this policy, children are defined as "persons below the age of 18 years". This is in line with the Rwanda Integrated Child Rights Policy and with the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child.

The aim of this policy is to protect children from any form of harm that might otherwise be caused, and it is an important part of the policy to identify the various risks, as discussed in the next section. However, one fundamental concern is child abuse. This policy uses the following internationally accepted definition of child abuse.

Child Abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. The main categories of abuse are defined by WHO complemented by the GBV law as Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect and Negligent Treatment, Sexual Abuse, and Exploitation. Physical Abuse involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g., hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture.)

Emotional or psychological abuse includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

Sexual Abuse includes all forms of sexual violence including 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. The sexual exploitation of a child, who is under the age of consent, is child sexual abuse and a criminal offence. An underage child cannot legally give informed consent to sexual activity, so sexual activity with a child without their consent is child abuse and a crime e.g., rape, or indecent assault.

RWAMREC's Child Protection Policy Framework



RWAMREC's Child Protection Policy contains a number of components:

- Periodic risk assessments;
- RWAMREC's promotion of positive behaviors, and putting children at the centre of all its work with children;
- Organizational systems, procedures and controls: for prevention and detection;
- Staff and member training and guidance: on systems and procedures, and on other aspects of how they are expected to behave;
- Regular monitoring and audit and;
- Sanctions and justice, if and when harm to children caused by RWAMREC's work is discovered.

Each of these is described further in the following sub-sections.

Periodic risk assessments

The foundation of RWAMREC's Child Protection Policy is the periodic overall risk assessment of RWAMREC's child protection risks, to be done annually via a workshop of senior management including executive Director led by the HR officer.

RWAMREC's management should also consider the need for additional assessments whenever RWAMREC embarks on significant new activities.

The latest risk assessment is included in Annex A.

RWAMREC's promotion of positive behaviors, and putting children at the centre of all its work with children

At the heart of RWAMREC's mission and objectives is the promotion of positive, non-Violent, non-abusive behaviors. Many of these will have the effect of reducing harm, or the risk of harm to children, for example the promotion of positive male parenting.

In support of its mission, RWAMREC expects all its staff and members to conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with it.

In line with following a rights-based approach, RWAMREC will always seek to put children at the centre of its work with them, involving them in the development and organization of its work with them, and in ensuring that this Child Protection Policy is effective, e.g. by involving them in the risk assessments. Only through listening carefully to children can it be confident that its work isn't causing harm to them.

Organizational systems, procedures and controls: for prevention and detection

1. Checks in staff and volunteer recruitment processes

Checks and procedures are in place in RWAMREC's recruitment processes to screen out, as far as possible, anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children.

2. Scrutiny of potential partners and their child protection policies

Before entering into a working partnership with another organization on a project where staff or volunteers of that partner organization would come into contact with children,

RWAMREC management should obtain details of the organization's child protection policy, and satisfy itself that entering into partnership with that organization does not introduce a significant risk to children.

If it can't do this, it should not enter into partnership with them, unless it is agreed that the organization will develop and implement before the project commences a child policy that meets RWAMREC's concerns.

[Note: In future, as RWAMREC's relationship with its partners develops, a requirement for them to sign a statement that they have read and understand RWAMREC's Child Protection policy may be introduced.]

3. Environmental risk assessments as part of project design

A child protection risk assessment should be undertaken as part of the design stage of any RWAMREC project that involves children.

4. Procedures to be followed when RWAMREC staff, or volunteers, identify actual or suspected incidences of harm, or risk of harm, to children in the course of their work

If staff or volunteers develop a justified suspicion of harm to children being caused either by RWAMREC, or by a partner organization with which RWAMREC is working, they should report this immediately and confidentially in writing to their line manager, or if their line manager is involved in the suspicion to the next person in line. The line manager will be accountable for further investigation.

No employee shall be dismissed, or suffer negative consequences, for having reported or testified a suspicion of harm to children.

5. Procedures to be followed if a child, or their parent or guardian, makes a complaint alleging harm to the child as a result of a RWAMREC project

If a child, or his parent or guardian, makes a complaint alleging harm to a child as a result of a RWAMREC project, then this should always be treated seriously, and responded to formally, by the project manager.

As part of the process of involving them in a project, children and their careers must be made aware of the procedures that exist to raise a concern or a complaint.

As key stakeholders they must be aware of the Child Protection Policy and of what they can expect in terms of the behavior of staff, other representatives and partners towards them. Child friendly materials should be used to communicate these messages.

6. Procedure to be followed if a child reports, during involvement with a RWAMREC project, that they have been abused by a third party (whether past or present)

If a child, or their parent or guardian, makes a complaint alleging harm to a child by a third party, then this should always be treated seriously, and responded to formally, by the project manager.

The action to be taken will depend on the third party involved. If it is a partner organization working with RWAMREC on a project, then RWAMREC will have already satisfied itself that the organization has an adequate child protection policy, including how it responds to allegations. In this case RWAMREC should refer the allegation onto the organization, and then seek to satisfy itself that it is handled adequately. If it can't satisfy itself of this, then it should discuss it at a senior level with the organization. If, ultimately, it can't satisfy itself, then RWAMREC should withdraw from the partnership in the most practical way possible.

If RWAMREC comes across evidence that a criminal offence has been committed, then it should ensure that this is reported to the competent jurisdictions.

7. Procedures to be followed when taking and using images of children, or recording descriptions of them and what they have said, done or experienced, in RWAMREC documents

Any engagement with children and their careers involving the taking of images, or voice recording, or written transcript, e.g. for the purposes of marketing, media/communications, consultation, participation and advocacy, should not exploit the child or career, nor increase their vulnerability, nor place them at risk. Adequate controls should be applied which will depend on the nature of the intervention.

In case RWAMREC intends to conduct a research or evaluation involving children in its

project, it will apply for the national ethical visa from the competent national ethic committee in order to comply with the national regulations.

8. Child protection in emergency cases

RWAMREC pledges to establish functional and reliable child protection systems that can prevent and respond to child protection concerns at all phases of its interventions particularly, In particular, to establish effective mechanisms to prevent and respond to child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence during emergencies.

Staff and member training on systems and procedures, and on other aspects of how they are expected to behave

All new staff and members should receive training on RWAMREC's child protection policy, as part of their induction. In addition, periodic refresher training should take place for all staff, including when significant new developments in RWAMREC's work occur which introduce new risks to be managed.

Induction training should include, at minimum: a general overview of the child protection policy; procedures to be followed on taking and using of images and recording of descriptions of children and what they say; and Procedures for responding to actual or suspected instances of harm, or risk of harm, to children.

Regular monitoring and audit

The monitoring of the operation of the Child Protection Policy will be carried out through the following mechanisms:

RWAMREC's monitoring and evaluation processes for its projects working with children, who will seek to assess the impact of the project on the children involved, including any negative impacts;

Audits carried out periodically, e.g., with partners and donors, on particular projects;

Formal risk management procedures for RWAMREC's work program as a whole, which are needed as part of program management arrangements under a Program-Based Approach.

Sanctions and justice, if and when harm to children caused by RWAMREC's work is discovered

Any employee, volunteer or director who is found to have contributed, through action or inaction, to RWAMREC's work causing harm to children will be subject to disciplinary action in line with RWAMREC's Human Resource policy, up to and including termination of employment and, where appropriate, referral to the justice system for criminal proceedings to be brought against them.

Sections IX and X of RWAMREC's 'Administrative Procedures Manuals' contain the detailed procedures for staff sanctions and separation.

**Roles and Responsibilities for Child Protection**

All Board Members, employees, volunteers, consultants, agency staff, sub contractors, partner organizations and visitors are obliged to follow this policy and maintain an environment that prevents exploitation and abuse of children. Specifically, following are the responsibilities each RWAMREC governing bodies, staff and stakeholders:

Members of the Board are responsible for:

- Ensuring adequate measures are in place to assess and address safeguarding risks;
- Putting in place adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, including relevant HR matters;
- Making sure policies and procedures are effectively applied in practice and that mechanisms are in place to provide assurance on compliance;
- Ensuring those safeguarding policies, practice, and performance are robustly and regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose;
- Actively promoting a safe culture and strong awareness of everyone's safeguarding responsibilities;
- Taking steps to help deter and prevent safeguarding issues from occurring;

- Ensuring there are mechanisms in place to promptly identify and act upon emerging safeguarding trends or issues;
- Ensuring that serious incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for:

- Ensuring the policy is implemented;
- Discussing safeguarding matters at Strategic Management Team meetings at periodic intervals to help ensure progress and address any challenges with implementing the policy and any cases arising;
- Presenting an annual safeguarding report on any instances and action taken/lessons learned to the Board;

All Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all new employees receive policy training as part of their induction;
- Ensuring measures are implemented within their area of responsibility;
- Following up and addressing issues appropriately.

HR staff is responsible for:

- Implementing the necessary protective procedures when recruiting new staff;
- Documenting who has signed the policy;
- Ensuring that briefing on this policy is built into Induction processes.

All staff is responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and the Code of Conduct;
- Reporting concerns using the Whistleblowing policy and procedures set out in the Code of Conduct.

Concerning PARTNERS:

- RWAMREC will advance the protection of children where possible, through its relationships with its partners, taking into account the particularities of the development context in which RWAMREC operates;
- RWAMREC expects its partners to pursue their work in the same spirit and create a Caring Environment for Children;

- RWAMREC expects partners who work directly with Children to develop an appropriate code of conduct that identifies the types of prohibited conduct that would cause abuse to Children and which provides guidance for their staff to avoid any acts of abuse against Children.

Do's and Don't's for Child Protection

All RWAMREC Staff must adhere to and abide by this Code of Conduct regarding Child Protection.

Staff and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Maintain physical/sexual relationships with children;
- Entertain relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Behave or act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language (verbal or body) that allude to suggestions or offer advice which is not modest, offensive or abusive;
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised;
- Condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act or behave in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others;

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior. It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks;
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children;

- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged;
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem;

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

Dissemination and Awareness



- All representatives receive training and contextualized support in order to prevent, report, and respond to safeguarding concerns. Representatives are made aware of the expectation to comply with this policy. Children and their families will be made aware of the standards of behavior they can expect from our representatives and of how they can raise a concern;
- RWAMREC will ensure that this policy, the PSEA Policy, the Code of Ethics, and reporting procedures are publicized, accessible, and made available to children, their caretakers, all staff & representatives, and all relevant third parties and stakeholders in a language and format they understand;
- Children and their caretakers must be made aware of procedures for reporting concerns, complaints, or violations of this policy;
- Implementing partners are responsible to take preventative measures to protect children involved in programming. All partners must be made aware of procedures for reporting concerns, complaints, or violations of this policy and its accompanying procedures;
- Journalists, politicians, celebrities & talent promoting and making visible the programs we implement across the globe are responsible to protect children from harm. All such persons are required to receive and review this policy;

- Guests traveling to program sites with or on behalf of Save the Children are required to receive and review this policy.

Reporting and Responding

Reporting Procedure

- RWAMREC expects from its staff to be alert to signs that may suggest a Child is at risk of abuse or exploitation.
- RWAMREC shall treat any allegation or concern regarding the abuse of a Child on seriously. The reporting procedure outlined below shall be followed strictly by RWAMREC staff. In following the reporting procedure, particular care shall be taken with regard to an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality when information is shared with appropriate people in the course of following up an allegation.
- To facilitate reporting, RWAMREC has designated the Human Resource Manager who shall be responsible for ensuring that the Policy for Child protection is implemented and followed;
- All child abuse shall be reported to the line manager and if a line manager is involved, the incident shall be reported to his hierarchy;
- Child abuse shall be reported through channels established by RWAMREC management;
- Confidentiality shall be upheld by line managers to maintain the integrity of the reporting system and motivate further Child abuse reporting;

Response to Child abuse

- RWAMREC shall ensure that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of child abuse and exploitation, and to ensure the safety and well-being of the child/ren involved.

Annexes

Annex A: RWAMREC Child Protection Risk Assessment

Area	Risk Details	Likelihood	Impact
Child Abuse	A predatory child abuser works his or her way into a RWAMREC position (paid or volunteering with children, and then acts to harm children	See note (1)	High
	A predatory child abuser works his way into a partner's position working with RWAMREC on a project working with children, and then acts to harm children	Low	High
	A RWAMREC member of staff or volunteer, or a member of staff of a partner organization, acts in an inappropriate way with a child	Medium	High
Safety of RWAMREC Project Environments	Attendance at a WAMREC project takes a child into an environment where they are more vulnerable to abuse from others, or to other forms of harm, and harm occurs.	Medium	High
Responding to Children	Past or current violence to a child is reported or exposed during a RWAMREC project, and an insensitive or ineffective response from the projects	Medium	High

Notes:

The 'Likelihood' has currently been assessed as 'Low', for all the risks listed, provided this policy is efficiently implemented. However, this will need to be reviewed following the PBA Organizational Assessment.

Signed**Venant NZABONIMPA****Chairperson**