The Mityana Charity

Registered charity no. 1064825

Safeguarding Policy

28th November 2023

1. Introduction

The purpose of the policy is protect people, particularly children, and vulnerable adults from harm that may be caused by them coming into contact with the implementation of projects and activities funded by the Mityana Charity. The policy lays out the commitments made by the Mityana Charity, and informs trustees and other committee members of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

The aim of the Mityana Charity is to generate resources dedicated to executing humanitarian initiatives in Uganda, primarily within Mityana and its adjacent districts. To ensure localized expertise and efficiency, the charity collaborates closely with an affiliate organization in Uganda, Partners for Community Transformation (PaCT), which is registered as a national entity in the country. The relationship has been formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding.

2. Policy statement

The Mityana Charity believes that everyone who is affected by its activities, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Mityana Charity will not tolerate abuse of exploitation by anyone involved in delivering the projects and activities funded by the charity.

The Mityana Charity commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work with a focus on:

- **Prevention** – Ensuring everyone associated with the Mityana Charity and PaCT know their responsibilities, has safeguarding training appropriate to their role, and design and undertake projects and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm.
- **Reporting** – Ensuring that there are safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns.
- **Response** – Following-up any safeguarding concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

3. Mityana Charity

The governance of the Mityana Charity is carried out by its trustees and committee members who are not trustees, all of whom are appointed at the AGM.

- They work in an entirely voluntary capacity so the allocation of funds for administration is minimal.
- They are mainly retired from their professional paid work and bring considerable experience from teaching, counselling, project management and accountancy to their roles.
- They are aware of the significant cultural differences between the UK and Uganda and are focused on assisting the evolution of beliefs and values as they relate to children's rights.

Occasionally some trustees and others who support the Mityana Charity visit Mityana at their own expense and not in an official capacity.

4. Partners for Community Transformation (PaCT)

PaCT exists to support and positively contribute to the lives of vulnerable Ugandans to attain full recognition in the society, through provision of education support, economic empowerment initiatives, human rights advocacy and increased access to WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and quality health services. Its organisational objectives are to:

- Increase access to education among vulnerable children in Mubende region.
- Promote and contribute towards the reduction of human rights violations and abuse in communities.
- Contribute towards access to quality healthcare and promotion of access to safe and clean water.
- Improve the economic status of households and individuals through sustainable economic empowerment initiatives.

The governance of PaCT is carried out by a Board of Directors with the Executive Director providing the leadership required for the organization to meet its operational, financial and strategic aims.

Although both the Miyana Charity and PaCT are focussed on a number of streams of work, contact with children and vulnerable adults is through the Education Sponsorship Programme, including the support of grandmothers (invariably older women who are looking after children whose parents have died). It is primarily in this area that trustees see their safeguarding role. That role would be extended if the Mityana Charity and/or PaCT is successful in obtaining funding for other projects affecting children and vulnerable adults.

5. Mityana Charity's safeguarding role in the UK

Trustees and committee members understand the definition of safeguarding as '"protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health and development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes".

The trustees and committee members of the Mityana Charity fully embrace their safeguarding obligations. Specific attention is given to:

- Appointing a trustee to take the lead on safeguarding and ensuring that person has the expertise, resources and support to provide advice on safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring that all trustees and committee members are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, including in the management of professional behaviour, whistle blowing and allegations against people in positions of trust, and how those responsibilities should be discharged.
- Discussing safeguarding at each meeting of the trustees and committee members.
- Maintaining ongoing focus upon the highest professional standards, conduct and integrity both on an individual basis and in collaboration with each other.
- Ensuring that any suggestion of misconduct or possible neglect or abuse of a child or vulnerable adult by a trustee or committee member, whether in the course of their duties or within their personal life, is referred to both Children's Social Care and The Charities Commission, as appropriate.

6. Mityana Charity's safeguarding role with PaCT

Everyone involved in the governance of the Mityana Charity see it as their responsibility to ensure that a robust safeguarding system is in place between themselves and PaCT on the levels of governance, strategic and operational management. This involves:

- Ensuring that the UK safeguarding legislation and guidance is used to help formulate reliable systems for PaCT's safeguarding processes, whilst also being sensitive to the impact of extreme poverty and recognising cultural difference, traditions and practices of the region.
- Overseeing PaCT's safer recruitment and selection process both for employees and volunteers which highlights the importance of safeguarding both children and vulnerable adults.
- Highlighting the need for PaCT's detailed checking of employees and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable to the professional role. Clear procedures should be in place for Ugandan Nationals through the Ugandan Police Force (for what is referred to as a 'Certificate of Good Conduct') and for those outside of Uganda equally rigorous searches should be conducted.
- Ensuring that PaCT has detailed safeguarding policy and accompanying procedure is in place and actively implemented in day to day practice – including professional code of conduct, whistle blowing policy, allegations against staff or volunteers procedure, child protection procedure and adult at risk procedure.
- Ensuring that safeguarding training is provided to PaCT's employees and volunteers at the point of induction, at regular intervals through the year and at the point of professional promotion through the organisation. This includes securing of specialist input should specific safeguarding concerns arise.
- Supporting the understanding of safeguarding in all aspects of PaCT's work (i.e. security of the building, establishing partnerships with other organisations, managing visits from individual sponsors and UK schools to Mityana).
- Commissioning regular audits of PaCT's safeguarding systems, including review, as necessary and appropriate.
- Ensuring that PaCT embraces safeguarding in its fullest sense, including expansion of ways to assist PaCT staff in evolving beliefs and values as they relate to children's rights, including right to safety, freedom from violence, neglect and abuse within family, substitute family, school and the wider community life.
- Assisting PaCT staff development and their contact with local schools in developing an understanding of giving children voice, promoting an environment which allows for that voice to be heard and 'telling' of violence, neglect and abuse.
- Assessing the level of both child protection and adult at risk activity by PaCT, including oversight on the effective investigation of abuse and/or neglect by local Ugandan Children's and Adult's Services.
- Reviewing safeguarding arrangements in light of poor or malpractice, learning the lessons from these experiences and making changes to practice, procedure, management and governance accordingly.

Contact with PaCT is fairly frequent, mostly through electronic means involving mainly trustees and committee members who hold key roles across the project streams. PaCT's monthly reports also give detailed updates on progress set against targets in each of the project areas. The frequency of contact with PaCT means that safeguarding concerns are often communicated in the early stages of them having arisen.

7. PaCT's shared principles, standards and values

It is expected that all PaCT's employees and volunteers to perform their duties according to their shared principles, standards and values, many of which run central to human rights and safeguarding legislation, including:

- Valuing, listening and respecting beneficiaries and treating their welfare as paramount.
- Selecting beneficiaries on the basis of need and having no beneficiaries treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs.

- Recognising the right of all beneficiaries to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- Maintaining a philosophy of clear partnership with beneficiaries, parents, carers and persons from the wider professional and community network.
- Establishing a safe physical environment which reflects attention to both health and safety and safeguarding, including anti-bullying measures.
- Informing beneficiaries and parents/guardians of key policy and procedures in an honest and open handed way.
- Remaining vigilant as a professional and maintaining central focus on beneficiaries welfare, safety and well-being.
- Ensuring all safeguarding concerns, including allegations against those holding positions of trust are taken seriously and responded to promptly.
- Using safeguarding procedures to share concerns with agencies as appropriate, whilst also recognising professional duty to treat confidential information with sensitivity and discretion.
- Recording with attention to detail and honesty, and storing information securely.

8. Approval

This policy was agreed by the trustees and committee member of the Mityana Charity on 28 November 2023.

This policy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis or at such time that safeguarding legislation, guidance, national and/or or local findings deem it necessary.