

## WEROBOTICS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (July 2019)

### INTRODUCTION:

The first digital natives are by definition youth. This same is true of drone natives. As such, youth are the future of robotics, and, importantly, will decide how robotics are used for positive social impact. To this end, WeRobotics is starting to engage more directly with youth in low-income countries by building their capacity and experience in the use of appropriate robotics solutions. With this new work, WeRobotics fully understands that new responsibilities around child protection are absolutely paramount. To this end, WeRobotics will absolutely not work with children and youth should it not be possible to mitigate and fully manage these risks per established guidelines. This explains why we have developed this child protection policy; to proactively work to mitigate and manage these risks. To be sure, we are fully committed to the safety and wellbeing of all youth. As such, we fully support the rights of children and youth and will do our utmost to ensure that the contexts we work in are safe for the youth we engage with. We take this responsibility very seriously. As such, WeRobotics has an absolute zero tolerance to child abuse and will take all the necessary steps to ensure that all youth with whom we work are provided a safe environment at all times. In sum, this Child Protection Policy represents our commitment to ensuring the protection of youth. By implementing this policy, we will be providing all personnel who have contact with children and youth the necessary training and skills to directly participate in implementing this policy and shared responsibility.

### PURPOSE OF POLICY:

This Child Protection Policy (CPP) has been developed to provide strategic and tactical guidance to prevent child abuse across WeRobotics programs. The policy will specify a range of risk management strategies that WeRobotics will implement to proactively reduce the risk of youth being harmed.

WeRobotics has established a CPP to protect children and youth from *all* forms of abuse and exploitation, in all of our activities and programs. The policy establishes general principles, guidelines and obligations to assist the stakeholders we work with to understand their own roles and responsibilities in protecting children. To be sure, the responsibility for child protection is one directly shared across WeRobotics personnel *and* personnel of WeRobotics partners. This explains why the CPP aims to educate personnel and partners about child abuse and to promote a culture of safety. In addition, the policy aims to establish an open environment where child protection concerns can be quickly and directly raised and managed ensuring that concerns are managed in a timely, fair and just manner, protecting the rights of all involved. As such, the policy will also provide guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

### **Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse**

WeRobotics has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation and abuse. Personnel and partners found to have violated our Child Protection Policy will be duly reported to relevant authorities per legally established guidelines.

### **Risk management approach**

Risk cannot be fully eliminated at all times. To this end, risk must be mitigated and managed intelligently and proactively. As such, WeRobotics will proactively work to provide safe and protective programs, activities and environments for the youth we and our partners engage with. We will do this by identifying, mitigating, managing and reducing any risk to youth that may be associated with the organizational functions, activities and programs of WeRobotics.

### **Sharing responsibility for child protection**

A Child Protection Policy is successfully implemented when said implementation is a shared responsibility. To effectively manage risks posed to youth, WeRobotics requires the full commitment, support and cooperation of all personnel, volunteers, Board, contractors, partners, etc.

### **Recognition of the best interests of the child**

It is imperative that all decisions relating to the welfare and protection of youth be made based on the principles of the best interest of the youth.

### **Procedural fairness**

WeRobotics will follow and apply procedural fairness to all concerned when responding to reports or allegations of child abuse.

### **Child rights**

All youth have the right to protection from exploitation and abuse. This is regardless of their nationality, culture, ethnicity, gender, religious or political beliefs, socio-economic status, disability status, family or criminal background.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**A child or young person/ youth** - any person under the age of 18 years

**Child Protection** - is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.

**Child Abuse** - abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying, child labour and family violence. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by both men and women, as well as by young people themselves and in some cases; professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust also abuse children.

**Physical abuse** - occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

**Emotional abuse** - occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name-calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent or caregiver; to the extent

that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.

**Neglect-** is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

**Sexual abuse** - Occurs when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification - regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. These can be contact or non-contact acts and includes exposing a child to, or involving a child in pornography.

**Exploitation** - Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others that are to the detriment of the child's physical and mental health, education, or moral and social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation

### **SCOPE OF POLICY:**

The scope of this Child Protection Policy includes all personnel (paid personnel, volunteers, consultants, contractors) and associates (interns, donors, board members, partners) who work on WeRobotics programs that are focused on youth.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

WeRobotics has developed a Child Protection Code of Conduct to provide clear guidance to personnel and associates about ways to minimise risk to children and make clear the standards of behaviour and practice required of them at all times when they are in contact with children/youth. These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

All WeRobotics personnel and associates are required to read and sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct, which is located at (Annex A).

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Senior management will:

- Ensure child safe recruitment, including screening of all personnel;
- Monitor and ensure compliance with the Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Induct new personnel and others, including information and training on child protection
- Arrange regular child's protection refresher training;
- Conduct screening and risk assessment of partners;
- Ensure that a child protection risk assessment is carried out as part of program design and done so by both senior management and in-country management;
- Ensure that child protection risks are monitored during program implementation at the field level;
- Ensure information held about children is safely stored; and
- Report to authorities suspected or known instances of harm or abuse in line with our procedures.

All Board members, personnel, volunteers and interns will:

- Comply with this policy and the Child Protection Code of Conduct;
- Follow the Child Protection Procedures;

Be alert to child Protection risks and incidents in their work; and  
Identify and seek continued understanding of child protection through training

Partner organisations (including organisations engaged as contractors and consultants) will:  
Comply with the WeRobotics Code of Conduct and Child Protection standards at all times  
whilst working on WeRobotics programs.

Individual consultants and contractors will:  
Comply with recruitment and screening procedures (as per personnel);  
Commit to and comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Code of Conduct  
and Child Protection Procedures.

## **REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS**

It is mandatory for all WeRobotics personnel and associates (including but not limited to volunteers, Board, visitors, partners, contractors, etc) to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of child abuse or any breach of the Child Protection Policy or Child Protection Code of Conduct. If said personnel and associates do have a concern, they should immediately follow the child abuse reporting procedures established by WeRobotics.

### **What should be reported?**

Any disclosure, concern or allegation from a child, community member, personnel or associate regarding the safety, abuse or exploitation of a child or young person participating in or impacted by WeRobotics work (this includes actual, suspected, or risk of abuse or harm to a child). Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by a WeRobotics personnel, volunteer or other associate that breaches the Child Protection Code of Conduct put in place by WeRobotics.

### **When to report?**

All child protection concerns must be reported immediately,

### **How to report?**

Child protection reports should be made verbally or by completing the WeRobotics child abuse incident reporting form See Annex C

### **Who to report to?**

Abuse reports related to activities at Flying Labs must be reported to one or both of the following WeRobotics co-founders: Patrick Meier and Sonja Betschart.

Dr. Patrick Meier  
Sonja Betschart

### **What will happen when a report is made?**

The co-founder of WeRobotics in consultation with the HR manager will discuss the allegations and then decide upon the next step. This will involve one or more of the following steps:

- Interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations and/or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision about the allegation;
- Reporting to local police and or child protection authority when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed;
- Reporting to local child protection services as necessary
- Referring the child to local support services if necessary
- Handling the concern internally if it is not a criminal matter
- No further action taken
- Providing support to all stakeholders (including reporter) as necessary

### **Confidentiality.**

Confidentiality is a key principle of reporting and managing child protection concerns. All information regarding a child protection concern must only be shared with the designated individuals listed above. The names of people involved and the details of the report will remain confidential. Information will only be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by law or when a report to police or child protection support services is made. WeRobotics will respect the rights of both the alleged victim and the alleged offender

### **Disciplinary action.**

A breach of or failure to comply with the Policy or the Child Protection Code of Conduct will result in:

Implementation of disciplinary procedures which may result in disciplinary action up to and including:

- In the case of an employee – dismissal of the employee;
- In the case of a volunteer - termination of the services of the volunteer;
- In the case of a Managing Board Member or a Board Committee Member - removal from office;
- In the case of a contractor who is a sole trader – termination of contract;
- In the case of personnel employed by a contractor or a subcontractor – a direction to the contractor requiring termination of the services of the person concerned and/or termination of the contract of the contractor or subcontractor;
- In the case of a visitor – a direction to leave the relevant activity;
- In the case of a partner – up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with WeRobotics

Someone under investigation may be transferred to other duties, be suspended, or following an investigation have their employment terminated. In addition, depending on the nature of the allegation, cases may result in legal action; and/or criminal investigation and prosecution.

Each report will be investigated on a case by case basis. Responses will reflect the nature of the allegation. Not all responses will involve reporting to authorities or termination. For example, in cases where there are low level breaches of the Child Protection Code of Conduct, the personnel involved in the matter may be retrained in child protection and/or have increased supervision for a period of time.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any personnel or associate found to:

- Have failed to report a child protection concern
- Have intentionally made a false allegation

WeRobotics will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration.

All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.

All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. WeRobotics will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith are protected.

The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout the investigation.

Children and community members with whom WeRobotics works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about WeRobotics personnel members and associates.

## **CHILD SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

WeRobotics is fully committed to using child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs.

Our child safe practices include:

- Assessing all positions for the level of risk in relation to contact with children.
- Conducting at least two referee checks that involve discussing child protection with referees
- Undertaking criminal history checks for each country the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the past 5 years, and for the individual's country of citizenship. WeRobotics will review these checks when personnel have a change in circumstances.
- Requiring statutory declarations where criminal history checks are not available
- Requiring applicants to disclose whether they have been charged with child abuse/exploitation offences
- Requiring applicants to read and sign onto the WeRobotics Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Including questions on child protection during interviews
- Including child protection in performance appraisals

WeRobotics will not permit any person to work or have contact with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

WeRobotics employment contracts include a provision for suspension or transfer to other duties of any employee who is under investigation and provisions to dismiss an employee after an investigation

Signed copies of the Code of Conduct will be kept by WeRobotics in a personnel file and a copy will be provided to the personnel or associate.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

WeRobotics recognises that there are a number of potential risks to children in the delivery of our programs. In recognising these risks, we proactively assess and manage risks to children in order to reduce the risk of harm. This is achieved by examining each activity and program and its potential impact on children. Activities and programs that involve direct work with children are considered a higher risk, and therefore require more stringent child protection procedures. Risk management is an ongoing part of all of our work involving and affecting children.

WeRobotics conducts a child protection risk assessment on every activity and project involving and affecting children prior to commencement. Mitigation strategies are put in place for any risk

identified and these (and any emerging risks) are actively monitored throughout the activity/program cycle.

At times, our programs may include the participation of vulnerable groups of children and youth, including but not limited to, children and youth from disaster affected communities and children and youth living in orphanages. We commit to designing, implementing and monitoring programs that are informed by a thorough risk assessment of the heightened risks posed to children and youth in these contexts.

Personnel and associates (as relevant) are trained in child protection and risk assessment. They are expected to be continually aware of potential risks to children and youth as well as to be actively minimising opportunities and situations where children and youth can be harmed.

WeRobotics involves children and youth in helping us to identify potential risks to their safety when they are participating in or affected by our work.

## **WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

WeRobotics determines whether partners are a child safe organisation by including child protection in our partner appraisal process. We commit to strengthening our partners ability to protect children and youth in our programs by investing in targeted capacity building, training and awareness raising on child protection.

Where a partner does not have their own Child Protection Policy, CoC and procedures in place, WeRobotics will require that said partner adopts the policy, Code of Conduct and procedures established by WeRobotics.

WeRobotics actively monitors the implementation of agreed child protection measures and external compliance obligations with our partners on an ongoing basis via project reports, project visits or annual audits.

WeRobotics includes clauses on child protection standards in all partnership agreements and contracts.

WeRobotics works with partners to undertake a child protection risk assessment for all programs and activities involving or affecting children and youth, this is monitored throughout the life of the project cycle.

## **KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

WeRobotics recognises our responsibility to keep children and youth safe when using their images or personal information for marketing and communication purposes. Accordingly, we have the following processes in place:

- The informed consent of the child or youth and their parent or guardian will be sought prior to photographing, filming or documenting personal details of a child or youth. An explanation of how the content will be used must be provided
- Local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images must be adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- Photographs, films, videos, text and DVDs must present children and youth in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children and youth should be adequately clothed and not posing in a way that could be seen as sexually suggestive

- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child (such as surname, school or community name) when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.
- In the context of projects that engage at-risk youth, photos or videos that reveal individual identities must not be taken. Photographs or videos must be taken in such a way that the faces of the youth in question cannot be seen. If this is not possible at the time, then any resulting photos or videos must blur out the faces of relevant youth. In addition, the original photos and videos (those without the blurring) must be kept in a separate, password-protected folder.
- Only WeRobotics personnel will have prior permission to capture multimedia content during project-related activities.
- Partners, volunteers, media representatives, donors, etc. who join these activities or part of these activities must sign the WeRobotics Code of Conduct on Child Protection.
- Any public release of any multimedia content must require written permission from WeRobotics.
- Multimedia content of WeRobotics activities cannot be sold for profit or used as a commercial product.
- Multimedia content remains in perpetuity the *joint* ownership of the individual who took said content and the individuals depicted in said content.

## VISITORS

WeRobotics visitors include but are not limited to:

- Volunteers
- Government officials
- People working for local or international media companies or as freelance journalists or photographers

All visitors to WeRobotics field projects/programs/activities will be required to read and sign onto the WeRobotics Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct as well as the WeRobotics Media Assets Agreement.

All visitors to WeRobotics facilitated project and/ or emergency response locations must be accompanied by WeRobotics personnel.

As necessary, visitors will be briefed on additional child protection guidelines and requirements related to a specific location, program or activity.

## POLICY REVIEW

The Child Protection Policy of WeRobotics will be reviewed every 3 years unless required earlier. The executive leadership of WeRobotics will manage the review of the policy. Personnel, children and young people as well as other stakeholders will be consulted in this process. Any change made to the Policy will be signed off by WeRobotics management and the Board.

## **ANNEX A: WEROBOTICS CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT<sup>1</sup>**

WeRobotics personnel and partners working on projects that include contact with children are responsible for maintaining a professional role when working with children. This Child Protection Code of Conduct aims to keep children and youth safe and serves to protect everyone from misunderstandings by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations that assist personnel and associates to establish and maintain clear professional boundaries when working with children.

I agree that while working with or on activities associated with We Robotics I will:

- Treat all children and youth with respect
- Not use language or behaviour towards children or youth that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Not engage children or youth under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present at all times when working with or near children or youth
- Not invite unaccompanied children or youth into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children or youth unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if at all possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children).
- Never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children or youth, or access child protection material through any medium
- Not use physical punishment on children or youth
- Not hire children or youth for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or development stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury
- Comply with all US child protection legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour. Comply as well with all child protection legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour in countries in which WeRobotics has programs.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child or youth exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child and youth exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during association with WeRobotics
- Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child or youth exploitation and abuse
- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child or youth

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<sup>1</sup> The WeRobotics Child Protect Code of Conduct is based on DFAT's established Code of Conduct.

- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing, filming or documenting personal details of a child or youth. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children and youth in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children and youth should be adequately clothed and not posing in a way 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 or youth when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.
- In the context of projects that engage at-risk children or youth, do not take photos or videos that reveal individual identities. Take photos or videos in such a way that the faces of the children or youth in question cannot be seen. If this is not possible at the time, then any resulting photos or videos must blur out the faces of relevant youth. In addition, the original photos and videos (those without the blurring) must be kept in a separate, password-protected folder.
- I will not seek to or make contact with any child or youth, outside WeRobotics program times, this is inclusive of direct contact or any contact via social media platforms.