

The General Church Committee for Helping Children in Crisis

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Doctrinal Rationale for General Church having the Use of Serving Children in Crisis:

“Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me” (Luke 9:48). “The atmosphere of a love for little children is an atmosphere of protecting and maintaining those who cannot protect and maintain themselves” (Conjugal Love 391).

The Heavenly Doctrines emphasize that the Lord is especially present to those who care for others who cannot care for themselves. This is the origin of the Love of offspring that parents feel for their children – it is an affection that comes directly from the Lord Himself through His heavens. Because the Lord operates so powerfully through the care of offspring, the General Church has historically had a special calling for serving the uses of protection, care and education of children.

Charge

“Helping Children in Crisis” or “HCIC” is a committee formed for the purpose of gathering resources in order to assist our congregations around the world in helping children who are experiencing significant crisis or chronic need that is deemed to be life threatening. The committee is charged with identifying situations where HCIC resources can be channeled in a way that provides for the health, wellbeing, educational, emotional and spiritual needs of these children who are in extremely dangerous and difficult crisis situations. While the committee operates according to policies that meet or exceed best practices of review and financial accountability, the instability of these situations makes it difficult to guarantee the success of our efforts. And yet because the needs of these children are great, it is imperative that we reach out with strength, wisdom and love that we may be of service.

Helping Children in Crisis is currently focusing efforts on one project, the development of the General Church Sacred Heart Orphanage in Etorra, Kenya. Here 65 orphans have come under the care of the congregation and are currently living in the sanctuary of the church. Approximately half of these children came to Etorra upon the collapse of their residence in Riounde. The Church in Etorra, knowing how poor the alternatives were, took them in and have provided for their care. The objective of the HCIC is to help the Church in Etorra provide a stable, safe home environment for these children that will allow them to heal, grow and mature in an atmosphere grounded in the teachings of the New Church. Once this project has stabilized, the committee will consider other possible projects.

Introduction

The following policy documents contain guidelines to support the operations of the Helping Children in Crisis Committee (HCIC) of the General Church. These guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to establish guidance for diligence for the work we do. HCIC recognizes that seeking to assist children in crisis situations and their caregivers will never be without risk, but HCIC believes that risk can be reduced and effectively managed by codifying our standards and striving to meet them.

HCIC is a committee of the Office of Outreach of the General Church of the New Jerusalem and is therefore subject to all the same operating procedures, financial & accounting standards and required approvals of the General Church. As such the HCIC mission which will be discussed in detail aligns with the Office of Outreach in the following manner: the identified children in crisis and potential donors the committee will seek to partner with may not be baptized in the General Church and therefore represent opportunities to spread the word of the Lord's Second Coming in the Three Fold Word.

To meet the immediate needs of the orphaned children in crisis identified by the Reverend Samson Mogusu Abuga and documented by HCIC, the following policies will target their specific situation and needs. These documents are intended to outline operating procedures, reporting standards, and a required code of conduct for committee members, donors, volunteers, and caregivers affiliated with HCIC.

Mission Statement

Mission Statement: The General Church Helping Children in Crisis (HCIC) is a General Church committee associated with the Outreach department that exists to facilitate the care of children in crisis by connecting those in need with the resources and people that can help.

Voluntary Undertaking: HCIC is a voluntarily undertaking that will be subject to review periodically to assess its effectiveness in meeting its mission and may be discontinued at any time by the General Church. In addition, this document may be changed at any time by the General Church.

Near Term Intent: Raise funds and align resources to support the children in crisis identified in Kenya. While HCIC will provide funds to organizations or individuals supporting children in crisis and will require information from such organizations or individuals, including details regarding the use of the funds obtained from HCIC, it will have no direct control over how those funds are utilized.

Vision for the Future: Grow and develop the organization to enable care giving for children in crisis beyond Kenya.

Supporting Capabilities:

- 1) Clear communication and transparency with all stakeholders to include children in crisis, care givers, volunteers, donors, the General Church, governments and the public.
- 2) Effective risk management through thorough reporting & auditing standards, training and mentoring of volunteers & caregivers, and due diligence in all things.
- 3) Sustainable funding for children in crisis by developing an effective, credible organization, exploring sponsorship models, business development activities and seeking broad inclusion in fundraising efforts.
- 4) Commitment to outreach through both the children we serve and those who seek to help them.

Guiding Principles:

...in the universal sense, good is the neighbor, because man is the neighbor according to the quality of the good that is with him from the Lord. And because good is the neighbor, so is love, for all good is of love; thus every man is the neighbor according to the quality of the love which he receives from the Lord.

~The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine No. 88

Wishing to do good to the neighbor is of charity. This is well known, for it is believed that giving to the poor, succoring the needy, assisting widows and orphans, benefiting ministers, contributing to churches, hospitals, and various pious uses, is of charity; again, that feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, going to those bound in prison, and many other things, are good works of charity. But yet they are good only in so far as a man shuns evils as sins. If the man does these good works before shunning evils as sins, they are external, even merit-seeking, because they spring from an impure fountain, and things issuing from such a fountain are inwardly evil. There is the man in them, and the world in them.

~Doctrine of Charity No. 17

Code of Conduct

I. Personal and Professional Integrity

All committee members, volunteers, donors, and caregivers associated with HCIC will act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the organization. HCIC promotes an environment that values respect, fairness and integrity. We will operate within the guiding principles found in the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church.

II. Mission

HCIC has a clearly stated mission and purpose, approved by the HCIC executive committee. All HCIC programs support that mission and all who work for or on behalf of the organization understand and are loyal to that mission and purpose. The mission will be responsive to its constituency, communities, and individuals served by HCIC.

III. Governance

HCIC has an active governing body in the form of the executive committee that is responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction of the organization and oversight of the finances, operations, and policies. The committee:

- Ensures that its members have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and that all members understand and fulfill their governance duties acting for the benefit of the identified children in crisis;
- Has a conflict of interest policy that ensures that any conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof are avoided or appropriately managed through disclosure, recusal or other means;
- Ensures that HCIC conducts all transactions and dealings with integrity and honesty;
- Ensures that HCIC promotes working relationships with committee members, caregivers, volunteers, and donors that are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness;
- Ensures that the organization is fair and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for any staff and volunteer positions;
- Ensures that policies of HCIC are in writing, clearly articulated and officially adopted;
- Ensures that the resources of the HCIC are responsibly and prudently managed;
- Ensures that the HCIC has the capacity to carry out its programs effectively; and,
- Reports to the General Church Board through the Office of Outreach which will approve and audit HCIC record keeping.

IV. Legal Compliance

HCIC is knowledgeable of and complies with all laws, regulations and applicable international conventions and retains counsel both through the General Church and pro-bono attorneys.

V. Responsible Stewardship

HCIC and its partners manage their funds responsibly and prudently. This should include the following considerations:

- HCIC spends a reasonable percentage of its annual budget on programs in pursuance of its mission;
- HCIC spends an adequate amount on administrative expenses to ensure effective accounting systems, internal controls, competent staff, and other expenditures critical to professional management;
- HCIC compensates staff, volunteers, and any others who may receive compensation, reasonably and appropriately;
- Fundraising activities will be pursued on a reasonable cost-basis subject to committee approval;
- All financial reports are factually accurate, complete in all material respects and in compliance with General Church reporting standards.

VI. Openness and Disclosure

HCIC will provide comprehensive and timely information to all stakeholders and is responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. All information about the organization will fully and honestly reflect the policies and practices of HCIC and its mission. All solicitation materials will accurately represent the HCIC's policies and practices and will reflect the dignity of program beneficiaries. All financial, organizational, and program reports will be complete and accurate in all material respects.

VII. Program Evaluation

HCIC will regularly review program effectiveness and is required to incorporate lessons learned into future programs decisions and actions. HCIC is committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness and will develop mechanisms to promote continuous improvement for committee members, volunteers and caregivers.

VIII. Equal Opportunity

HCIC promotes inclusiveness and equal opportunity of participants, donors and volunteers in everything we do. Diversity of experience, background and culture is considered an advantage and pursued whenever possible. Transparency not only ensures the responsible care of children at risk, but also enables the inclusion of all those interested in serving this use in accordance with the mission statement.

IX. Fundraising

HCIC will always be truthful in all solicitation materials. We will respect the privacy concerns of individual donors and expend funds consistent with donor intent when specified and aligned with the mission. HCIC will disclose important and relevant information to potential donors. In fundraising, HCIC will operate according to the accepted fundraising policies of the General Church Development office.

In raising funds from the public and businesses HCIC will adhere with following the rights of donors:

- To be informed of the mission of the organization, the way the resources will be used and their capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes;
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization's governing board and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities;
- To have access to the organization's most recent financial reports (through the General Church);
- To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given;

- To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition;
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by the law;
- To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature;
- To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organizations or hired solicitors;
- To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share; and,
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.¹

¹ These ten points are taken from A Donor Bill of Rights, developed by the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel, the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.