

**LAUGHTER AFRICA'S
STATEMENT OF
ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability is core to Laughter Africa's values and is at the heart of all our work.

For Laughter Africa, accountability is the process through which an organisation balances the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making and activities, and delivers against this commitment.

Accountability is based on four dimensions - transparency, feedback mechanisms, participation and learning and evaluation - that allow the organisation to give account to, take account of and be held to account by stakeholders.

We strive to be accountable to all our stakeholders – those individuals, organisations or groups that have an interest in or influence our work including supporters, volunteers and donors. However, our primary accountability however is to the beneficiaries with whom we work.

The 4 main principles that underpin our ability to be accountable are:

1. Transparency and sharing of information:

Laughter Africa will keep the public and the street children that they work with informed about their organisation and programme activities, in ways that can be accessible, engaging, easily understood by all beneficiary groups and appropriate to the context of the programme. Laughter Africa is committed to keep the public and beneficiary communities informed about Laughter Africa's background, mission, values, contact information, specific programme goals/objectives, activities, cost, beneficiary selection processes, complaints mechanisms, any other relevant information and reports on our progress. Laughter Africa's open information policy details how Laughter Africa intends to do this. Laughter Africa will also agree with the street children on the best ways of making information available, appropriate to the programme context and situation. Laughter Africa will hold weekly meetings with the street children in the Interim Care Centre to communicate any new relevant information. Laughter Africa will also monitor how well information is being disseminated, understood and received through consultation with the street children and take steps to improve the dissemination process if necessary.

2. Feedback and Complaint Handling Systems

Laughter Africa has established safe and accessible mechanisms to ensure that beneficiaries and major stakeholders can raise concerns, make suggestions or make a complaint, about the decisions or actions of Laughter Africa, ensuring that complaints are received, heard, reviewed and acted upon in a timely manner throughout the lifespan of the project. For more information, please refer to the Laughter Africa Complaints handling policy and procedures. Laughter Africa also keeps a record of all the complaints received, the responses given and subsequent project decisions made in a complaints log (a template of which can be found in the Complaints handling policy and procedures). The Complaints handling policy and procedures also has clear procedures in place to address allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse, misconduct, misuse of funds and corruption. Laughter Africa will also ensure that the complaints mechanisms that are in place have been agreed by the street children and are fair, impartial and timely. Laughter Africa staff and volunteers will ensure that the street children are aware of the complaints mechanisms in place and how to access it. Laughter Africa staff and volunteers will also be trained in how the complaints mechanism work and will understand their responsibility to it. Laughter Africa will encourage their staff to facilitate the street children to make suggestions, raise concerns and make a complaint throughout programme implementation if the need so arises.

3. Participation and Informed Consent

Laughter Africa has clear standards and guidance on participation of key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, in their programmes at all stages of the project cycle including programme assessment, design and implementation of activities. Laughter Africa plans to encourage the ongoing participation from the street children throughout the programme in decision-making processes and activities. For instance, Laughter Africa will hold weekly meetings with the street children in the Interim Care Centre to invite and encourage participation and involve them in all stages of Laughter Africa's programme activities. Laughter Africa promises to listen to the needs, concerns and views of the street children. We are committed to act on the basis of what they are telling us and respond to them by the choices we make and actions we undertake. As part of Laughter Africa's commitment to participation, we will encourage the involvement of the street children in regularly reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the performance of Laughter Africa's activities and assessing our impact.

4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Laughter Africa will ensure that our programmes are judged by those directly affected by them. Laughter Africa has an evaluation policy in place which we will adhere to and we have systems in place that enable lessons to be captured and applied within the organisation and throughout the programme cycle. Laughter Africa actively seeks and includes the views of street children in our monitoring and evaluations. For instance, we will have an evaluation form that we give to the street children once they have returned to their families and ask them for their thoughts, comments and suggested improvements as well as our weekly meetings where the street children can air suggested improvements and thoughts. As a result of any findings of programme reviews and evaluations, Laughter Africa will adapt and modify the way we work accordingly. Laughter Africa will share findings of any monitoring, evaluations and learning with all staff, volunteers and street children and encourage knowledge sharing and learning within Laughter Africa.

All Laughter Africa programmes must have these 4 principles in place so that we are fully accountable to the people we serve.