Deaf-led, authentic and proven, DeafKidz International through its 2020 – 2023 strategic framework will be working to ensure no deaf child endures the agony of abuse, during and post COVID-19.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the DeafKidz International strategic framework for 2020 – 2023. Considered, realistic and achievable, this strategy draws reference from the innovative work of DeafKidz International to date and looks to confirm the charity’s position as the global leader for the safeguarding and protection of deaf children. Suffice to say, the strategy has been subject to extensive consultation with our partners, investors, advisors and, of course, deaf children themselves. In addition, the strategy draws from the rich heritage of Sound Seekers with whom we merged in 2020; this allowing us to access more than 60 years’ experience of delivering quality ear & hearing care in the most difficult of settings.

As we live through one of the most existential challenges of modern times, the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded that the crisis has disrupted the lives of millions of deaf children. Furthermore, it has led to high levels of emotional vulnerability and, thereby, a greater susceptibility to abuse and exploitation.

Deaf-led, authentic and proven, DeafKidz International through its 2020 – 2023 strategic framework will be working to ensure no deaf child endures the agony of abuse, during and post COVID-19. But we can’t do this alone and so I look for you to join us and to support DeafKidz International as we embark upon the next three years of our journey and to our 10th anniversary in 2023.
OUR VISION
A world where Deaf, hard of hearing, deafened and DeafBlind children, young people and adults are able to live safely and without fear of abuse and exploitation.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT
With safeguarding at the heart of all we do, DeafKidz International aims to respond comprehensively to the protection, health, wellbeing and access to education needs of deaf children, young people and adults worldwide.

THE CONTEXT
Deafness is the third largest disability globally with 466 million deaf people worldwide yet it remains the least resourced. The abuse and exploitation of deaf children is endemic, with deaf children three times more likely to be abused than hearing children, but safeguarding and protection networks lack the means to support deaf survivors/victims of abuse and deaf children at risk.

Deaf children face barriers to accessing services and support from teachers, social workers, police workers, medical staff and the justice system, often due to the lack of deaf awareness and resources available to these professionals who are unable to effectively communicate with or support the needs of deaf children. In low-middle income countries often children are not even diagnosed as being deaf which exacerbates risk of abuse and prevents them from accessing vital support they need.

DeafKidz International (DKI) was founded by Steve Crump, deaf himself, in 2013 after witnessing the appalling abuse suffered by deaf children in sub-Saharan Africa. DeafKidz International seeks to address the vital gaps in meeting the safeguarding and protection needs of deaf children and reducing risk and vulnerability while supporting deaf children, young people and adults to lead their fullest lives ensuring equal and rightful access to health, education and employment as their hearing peers. DeafKidz International merged with Sound Seekers (The Commonwealth Society for the Deaf) in April 2020 and the combined entity is now 'DeafKidz International'. The merged DeafKidz International combines the 60 years of history, heritage, expertise and experience of Sound Seekers with the passion and innovation of DKI, positioning the new combined organisation to become a global leader in the deafness and hearing loss sector.

Drawing its authority from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which guide international development agenda, DeafKidz International aims to promote and realise the rights of deaf people as enshrined, endorsed and promoted in international legislation. The reality for deaf people in low middle income countries is that they are often socially isolated, excluded from school and have limited opportunities for income and employment. Our organisational objectives and strategy aim to ensure deaf children, young people and adults are never left behind and can enjoy their rights in a fully inclusive society while able to live safely, access health and education, secure a livelihood and sustain their future.

STRATEGY – 2020-23
Our Signing Safe Futures Project in Jamaica is providing Gender Based Violence awareness training to deaf women and girls, reinforced through martial arts and dance.
OUR STRATEGIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES

I. Prevent and mitigate the abuse of deaf children, young people & vulnerable adults
   a. Empower deaf children, young people and vulnerable adults, their families and communities to know, prevent and respond to abuse
   b. Ensure governments, civil society and service providers in humanitarian, development, education and health settings are able to respond to the inclusive safeguarding and protection needs of deaf children, young people and vulnerable adults through their own systematic architectures, policies, programmes and services.

II. Reduce risk and vulnerability by ensuring accessibility and removing barriers to communication for deaf children, young people and adults
   a. Support the development and acquisition of communication skills including sign language, sign supported spoken language, community ethnic sign, aural method and DeafBlind manual for deaf children, young people and adults

III. Ensure deaf children, young people and adults have equal access to health, education and economic opportunities to realise their rights and potential
   a. Support deaf children, young people and adults to access local, sustainable, low cost early identification and hearing health interventions led, managed and delivered by trained local partners and professionals
   b. Support design and delivery of accessible public health education and health promotion programmes and services specifically for deaf children, young people and adults
   c. Support deaf children, young people and adults to access mental health and wellbeing services and programmes that respond to their specific needs and risks
   d. Support the rightful access, inclusion and progression of deaf children through the education system
   e. Support deaf young people and adults to access livelihoods and employment opportunities enabling economic independence

IV. Enhance deaf led representation & advocacy
   a. Through our brokerage and support, empower international, regional, national and local organisations of and for deaf people to represent and advocate the safeguarding and protection rights of the communities they serve

V. Build a robust and sustainable organisation by strengthening organisational effectiveness, efficiency and resilience
   a. Grow the income through diversified funding streams
   b. Strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems
   c. Ensure people capacity and structure meet the needs of the organisation
   d. Raise the visibility and profile of the organisation
We will employ different modes and strategies to effect change including:

a. Programmes & programming
b. Training
c. Consultancy
d. Advocacy, research & policy making
e. Networking & representation
f. Publications including digital publication (podcasts, videos, etc.)
g. Commissioning

INTERSECTING AREAS

DISABILITY
Deafness is the third largest disability globally (World Health Organisation, World Development Report, 2015) but the least resourced. We will strive to ensure that disability-related policy and programming is inclusive and responsive to the specific needs of deaf people.

GENDER
Our work will challenge gender barriers and stereotypes and ensure equal access for deaf women, men, girls and boys to our programmes and services. Deaf girls and young women experience endemic abuse. We will therefore champion gender equality and parity in all our work, empowering deaf girls and women to live safely and without fear of abuse.

INNOVATION
Our work will have a unique focus on achieving scale, quality and impact through the use of innovative digital technologies and through exploring sustainable solutions that improve quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our programmes and strategies.

POLICY
DKI’s contribution to lasting change is only possible if its experience, learning and product outputs are translated into policy and advocacy work that promotes attitudinal, systemic and procedural change. We will contribute to the evidence base on the safeguarding and protection of deaf children, young people and adults thereby informing wider policy and practice.

Our DeafKidz Goal! Project with Slum Soccer responds to the life skills of deaf children and young people in India, through football coaching and training deaf football coaches.
Currently we are focusing on:

- The Gambia
- India
- Jordan
- Malawi
- Pakistan
- Rwanda
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- United Kingdom
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

CONCLUSION

Our three-year strategy aims to address the major barriers faced by deaf children, young people and adults in low resource and complex humanitarian settings, by applying a change framework that addresses the safeguarding and protection, communication, health, education and economic needs of the deaf communities we serve.

In the period 2020-2023, DeafKidz International will focus on the priority areas outlined above, implemented through an integrated service and partnership model working with a range of partners overseas, including deaf people’s organisations, NGOs and government entities, to ensure our work is locally driven, impactful and sustainable. We will monitor and the evaluate the impact of our work globally in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of our approaches to positively impact the lives of deaf children, young people and adults.

At the same time, we will focus on developing and growing our organisation to ensure our work is sustainable in the longer term by strengthening organisational effectiveness, efficiency and resilience while remaining agile and flexible to the needs of our key constituency - deaf children, young people and adults.

Our way of working puts deaf children first, allowing DeafKidz International, as a truly deaf-led organisation, to utilise its specialist expertise to ensure no deaf child is left behind.
London Office / Correspondence Address:
DeafKidz International,
Studio 410,
Pelican House,
144 Cambridge Heath Road,
London E1 5QJ

Registered UK Office
44 Grand Parade,
Brighton,
BN2 9QA

Call/Text
+44 7305 433 250

Email
info@deafkidzinternational.org

Website
www.deafkidzinternational.org