

June 20, 2023

## SIM's apology and commitment to the children of missionaries

### Our apology

On behalf of SIM and its members, we would like to extend an apology to the adult children of SIM missionaries. We deeply apologise for any distress and harm that you may have experienced during your childhood and while living overseas with your parents. We acknowledge the profound and lifelong impact that the distress and harm has had on your health and your relationships. We grieve that some of you experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from those who were entrusted with your care, and that many perpetrators of abuse have avoided accountability. We are sorry that you experienced traumatic events such as civil conflicts, separation from friends and loved ones, and that many of you experienced violence, or lived under the threat of violence. We regret that many of you who attended boarding school experienced separation from your parents and felt a sense of abandonment. For others, we acknowledge the difficulty and pain of reintegrating into the culture of your parents' home country on return from mission. We apologise that you were not always met with care and compassion, and that you were not always provided a say in matters involving your own care. For too many years we have failed to appropriately acknowledge and respond to you. We are thankful for and honour the courage of those who have spoken up, often at great personal cost. We acknowledge your experiences and want you to know that you have been heard. We understand that others will never speak with us directly for valid reasons. SIM International is committed to raising awareness on behalf of current, past and future generations of children who have experienced life on the mission field, and to implementing programs to protect and prioritise the wellbeing of children involved in our organisation – no matter where they are in the world.

### Our commitment

We are committed to:

- building awareness of the trauma and abuse that you experienced.
- prioritising the safety of children, including ensuring that children are listened to and have a say in the decisions that impact them.
- providing safe places for children, including promoting policies and procedures that acknowledge and respond to the experiences of children; and
- honouring and listening to the AMK community, including providing responses to everyone that contacts us in a way that responds to their circumstances.

Signed:



Joshua Bogunjoko SIM International Director

We invite you to reach out and share your story with us. We would be honored to listen to what you want to share.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **How do I reach out to SIM?**

If you would like to share your story or if you have any further questions, please reach out to the listening team that has been set up by your local SIM office [If you don't know your local SIM office and need assistance you can reach out to SIM International at \[mystory@sim.org\]\(mailto:mystory@sim.org\).](#)

### **How will SIM respond?**

SIM will respond to you with respect, care and dignity. SIM will work with you to consider a compassionate and appropriate response specific to you and your needs. [SIM will respond to your questions](#) and if you wish, a meeting will be arranged with representatives from your local SIM office.

### **What happens if I disclose the abuse I experienced?**

You will be heard and support will be offered to you. Where you disclose a reportable matter, SIM will fulfill its reporting obligations such as reporting to child protective agencies and law enforcement.

Where there is a complaint, SIM will suspend any current worker against whom a misconduct concern has been raised, pending an assessment of their conduct.

### **I was impacted by my time as an MK but I did not suffer 'abuse' from anyone. Is SIM interested in hearing my story?**

Yes we are interested in your story. We understand people can be impacted and traumatised by events or situations that do not necessarily meet the definition of abuse. There may be difficult things that you have experienced that have been traumatic even if they do not meet the definition of abuse.

### **Do I have to provide corroborating evidence for SIM to acknowledge the trauma and/or abuse that I suffered?**

No. We are willing and able to affirm your story and acknowledge the impact that it had on your life, based solely on your account.

**Can I bring a support person if I decide to speak with SIM directly about a child safety concern?** Yes, it is important that you have support.

### **Why is SIM's Child Safety Program very different to my previous experience as an AMK?**

In the last few years, there has been significant reforms in the area of child safety. SIM's Child Safety Program has greatly benefited from the recent integration of trauma informed, restorative justice and public health principles.

### **Will SIM make accounts they receive from the AMK community public?**

No, not without permission from the person to whom the story relates.

### **I am uncomfortable about going into what happened to me in detail, how much information do I have to provide SIM?**

You can share as much or as little as you feel comfortable. We do not want these meetings to retraumatise people who have experienced trauma. You do not have to talk about the trauma that you suffered if you do not want to. You may want to talk about issues, such as how your trauma impacted your life, or you may just want to hear an apology. It is in your choice.

**Will SIM take action against anyone who has caused harm in the past?**

SIM may take action against people who caused harm to anyone in the past as far as the law allows. As an organisation, SIM is unable to take disciplinary actions against people who are not currently employed with SIM or members of SIM.

**Will SIM conduct an investigation?**

The purpose of our contact would be to acknowledge your experience. Where the matters you raise relate to someone currently engaged with SIM we may need to take further steps to investigate the matters raised. The reason for doing so is to ensure that the people serving with SIM are fit for the work and that other vulnerable people are safe. It will be your choice whether you participate in an investigation, and it is not required.

**What if I am not ready to talk to SIM now?**

We understand that each person who has experienced trauma will recover at a pace and in a way that is right for them. The time to talk about their experiences needs to be determined by each individual. SIM wants people to know that there will be no time limit for when you can approach SIM. We will be available if and when you want to talk. We understand that if you do not want to talk, you are reaffirming your right to self-determination, and we respect your choices.

**If no one comes forward, will SIM think that AMK's did not experience trauma and or abuse?**

No, we understand that people will come forward in their own time, or perhaps not at all. We have already received multiple stories of trauma and/or abuse and are aware and grieved to know there are many who experienced this.