



## **HUMANITY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY ORGANISATION (HDPO) SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Safeguarding means promoting and protecting people's health, well-being and human rights, and enabling them to live free of harm, exploitation and abuse. A safeguarding approach means that HDPO has the responsibility to ensure that it does not expose children, young people or vulnerable adults (beneficiaries, employees) to the risk of discrimination, neglect, injury or abuse, and that any concerns that it has about the safety of vulnerable groups of people are addressed and reported to the appropriate authorities. Safeguarding will in the context of this policy be conceived as protecting against abuse that is against sexual harassment, intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation. Safeguarding is part of HDPO's mission because it's one of its primary tasks closely connected to its core values of human dignity, integrity and inclusiveness; and also organizations knows that, if its guards the safety of its people and the communities it serves, its anti-poverty work will be more effective.

### **Policy Statement and Pledges**

- a) The HDPO pledges that the safeguarding of its people (employees, beneficiaries) against sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, intimidation and violence, neglect and exploitation will continue to be a primary guiding principle for its anti-poverty work, for its programs and its enterprises.
- b) The HDPO pledges that the commitment to safeguarding will continue to be articulated at the level of its values, code of conduct and work-instructions.
- c) It pledges that safeguarding will continue to be incorporated in the design of programs and enterprises.
- d) It pledges that where necessary secondary safeguarding mechanisms will continue to be installed and then maintained.

- e) The HDPO organization and the HDPO leadership pledges that it will analyze, describe and document the safeguarding work it has done and does. HDPO will make this research available to its partners and donors, but also to other organizations in the sector.
- f) At its all levels HDPO will continue to look for gaps and weaknesses in its safeguarding practices and address them wherever and whenever they are found. HDPO envisions this as an ongoing effort.
- g) HDPO pledges that it will continue to research, innovate and test new safeguarding solutions.

### **Scope of Application**

HDPO is committed to safeguard its entire people. It wants to protect all of its employees, all of its beneficiaries against abuse that is against sexual harassment, intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation.

This policy applies equally to:

- (i) The board of trustees;
- (ii) All staff contracted by HDPO (under any contractual mechanism);
- (iii) The organization beneficiaries like, children, adolescents, adults with special needs and women among the employees.

However, HDPO will not hesitate to add other general categories to this list in future if it concludes that that is warranted. HDPO has been and will be safeguarding its people across all its programs and enterprises; health, education, humanitarian, climate change and research. All of the above means that this safeguarding policy is relevant for all cases within HDPO where employees abuse other employees, where employees abuse beneficiaries, where beneficiaries abuse employees -and the cases where beneficiaries abuse beneficiaries within HDPO's span of control or sphere of influence.

### **Safeguarding Principles**

HDPO is therefore also committed to the six key principles that should underpin all safeguarding functions, actions and decisions:

- a) Empowerment: people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- b) Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- c) Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- d) Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need. Organizations have a safeguarding duty of care to beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, including where down-stream partners are part of delivery. This duty of care extends to people at risk of abuse within the communities the organizations serve.
- e) Partnership: local solutions through services working with their communities who have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- f) Accountability: accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

### **Standards of Behavior**

To ensure that the risk of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults is kept as low as is reasonably practical, HDPO strictly prohibits the following behaviors.

- (i)** Sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- (ii)** Sexually abuse or exploit children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- (iii)** Hit or physically assault a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- (iv)** Put a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk of harm.
- (v)** Sexual activity with a community member or with adults with special needs
- (vi)** For staff to have a sexual relationship with a volunteer.
- (vii)** Enter into any sexual interaction with fellow employees of HDPO in exchange for money, goods or favors or based on any form of coercion
- (viii)** Use a position of power to take unfair advantage of a fellow staff member, community member, partner or volunteer
- (ix)** Bully, humiliate or discriminate anybody, for example based on religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, color of their skin, age, ethnicity, caste.

## **Safeguarding Practices**

HDPO has been doing its safeguarding work within a framework of iterative learning: try, measure, and try again if necessary.

## **Ethos**

HDPO is part of a community and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries) have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. HDPO recognizes the importance of providing an ethos and environment that will help children and vulnerable adults to feel safe, secure and respected; encourage them to talk openly; and enable them to feel confident that they will be listened to. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. HDPO aims to provide a stable, secure and predictable element in children and vulnerable adults' through:

- a) Ensuring the content of activities includes aspects of social and emotional development
- b) Ensuring that HDPO helps children/vulnerable adults to stay safe by providing support that helps them to recognize when they don't feel safe and identify who they can talk to
- c) Providing suitable support and guidance so that children/vulnerable adults have a range of supportive adults to approach if they are in difficulties
- d) Ensuring all steps are taken to maintain physical safety
- e) Ensuring all staff and volunteers are able to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of HDPO's procedures and lines of communication
- f) Monitoring children/vulnerable adults who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- g) Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies
- h) HDPO has articulated its vision, mission and values in a series of inspiring documents. It has in connection with those formulated a code of conduct that describes forbidden behavior with depth and detail. Safeguarding is an important element in all those documents.

## **Prevention**

## **Safe Design**

HDPO has and will continue to incorporate safeguarding into the design of programs and enterprises and their work processes.

HDPO will:

- a) Ensure all staff has access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- b) Undertake its operations in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with HDPO.
- c) Implement appropriate safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- d) Ensure staff receives orientation on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- e) Appoint a Designated Person to ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority within HDPO.
- f) Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

## **Secondary Safeguarding Mechanisms**

HDPO has and will continue to install secondary safeguarding mechanisms to mitigate abuse risks for its people and the high risk groups within them. Some of those mechanisms have a general character; they work across programs and enterprises. Others are very specific; they work within a singular program or activity. The ethos work mentioned above is of course the first general line of defense against abuse.

Other general mechanisms are the attention paid to safeguarding in the recruitment and selection process and in the induction and training of employees; a regular practice of risk-analysis; line management responsibility and action; the deterrence achieved through the repression outlined further on.

## **Safeguarding in Recruitment and Selection**

HDPO is fully committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of potential new staff, trustees and volunteers. HDPO has and will ensure it assesses the eligibility of candidates from a safeguarding perspective. In summary, the following has and will be considered when planning recruitment:

- a) Those responsible for recruitment and selection are properly oriented on HDPO Safeguarding Policy and procedures. All vacancy announcements or Advertisement will affirm HDPO's commitment to our Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy. All job descriptions will truthfully reflect the remit of the role advertised and the corresponding candidate requirements. This will help avoid the appointment of an unsuitable candidate;
- b) Applicant screening will pay particular attention to gaps in employment history or frequent changes of employer and address;
- c) All offers of employment will be conditional on receiving at least two professional references which will be rigorously followed up on including questions on disciplinary actions;
- d) The candidates will be interviewed. During interviews, the candidate's motivation for, and attitudes towards working with HDPO will be explored.
- e) All essential qualifications and relevant professional accreditations and memberships should be verified to the satisfaction of the relevant recruitment manager. Candidates will be asked to detail how their skills and experience align to that of the job description, allowing the recruiter to assess suitability for the role;
- f) The successful candidate will be required to provide proof of identity (passport, ID card);
- g) All new hires receive comprehensive orientation in the safeguarding policy and procedures and associated documents (Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing etc.);
- h) All new hires are required to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct as a condition of employment.

### **Education/Training**

HDPO has and will continue to make safeguarding an important element of the education and training of staff. It will do that on the level of the induction of all employees and on the level of the training of professionals for specific functions.

- (i) Every new hire will receive brief introduction on vision, mission and values of HDPO, on the Code of Conduct and on the Safeguarding policy and duly acknowledge all of those as part of their induction.
- (ii) HDPO will continue to make sure that the professionals who will handle the cases & complaints have competencies in line with the highest standards and the best practices.
- (iii) HDPO will regularly across the programs and enterprises organize campaigns to create awareness around safeguarding. The campaigns will be precisely targeted and tailored to ensure that they are relevant for the staff and beneficiaries in question
- (iv) It is recognized that crucial to creating an organizational culture that promotes the protection and well-being of young people, safeguarding needs to be embedded from the very beginning of the employee journey. To this end, all employees will receive safeguarding orientation and training as a mandatory part of the new starter induction process.

### **Risk-Analysis**

HDPO will in future proactively if it knows risks of abuse (sexual harassment, intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation) are present in a process and suspects that they are insufficiently mitigated, do an in-depth analysis of process, risks, risk enhancing factors. That analysis will be based on dossiers, observations and interviews. It will result in recommendations to redesign the work process and/or to add or change secondary safeguarding mechanisms. A risk-analysis as such will already have a deterring effect. The implementation of its recommendations will lower risk and raise mitigation structurally. The risk-analysis practice should be seen as the main element in the framework of iterative learning around safeguarding. From a long term perspective the practice has a cyclical character.

### **Line Management and Prevention**

Within HDPO line managers have direct responsibilities in preventing abuse. They have to make sure that safe designs are implemented, that secondary safeguarding mechanisms are maintained. They have to understand residual risks of abuse that are connected with processes and events and have to mitigate those where necessary and possible. They have to make sure that employees are

familiar with the ethos of HDPO, with the general and the relevant specific safe guarding policies. Line managers have a unique responsibility to stop abuse. They are the ones that are in the position and have the power to make sure that it ends. They therefore have the obligation to immediately intervene whenever they witness abuse or are alerted to it. Finally, line managers within HDPO are responsible for creating the atmosphere of openness and accountability within their teams that makes it possible for witnesses and victims to come forward.

It is a vital element of prevention that the highest management in a visible manner takes responsibility for safeguarding. That gives everybody in the organization the unmistakable message that all forms of abuse are unacceptable, that the organization takes the fight against them serious, that perpetrators will be punished, victims will be supported. HDPO's highest management has always and will continue to embrace this responsibility.

### **Working with Other Agencies**

HDPO recognizes and is committed to its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies both to ensure people's needs are met and to protect them from harm. We will endeavor to identify those people and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals, in discussion with parents/careers as appropriate.

HDPO is not the investigating agency when there are child/vulnerable adult protection concerns and will therefore pass all relevant cases to the statutory agencies. The organization will however contribute to the investigation and assessment processes as required and recognize a crucial part of this may be in supporting the child/vulnerable adult whilst these take place.

HDPO will always work to establish strong and co-operative relationships with relevant professionals in other agencies.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

HDPO recognizes that all matters relating to child/adult protection are confidential. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management will be shared on a need to know basis only and will be kept secure at all times.



All staff/volunteers must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. All staff/volunteers must be aware that they cannot promise a child or vulnerable adult to keep secrets which might compromise the child or vulnerable adult's safety or wellbeing (see above: Dealing with Disclosures).

A repressive apparatus consists of reporting channels, professional investigative units, bodies that advise and decide about punishment. HDPO has created such an apparatus and will maintain it.

### **Reporting**

HDPO has created a reporting system for abuse (and other violations) with several channels that complement each other. HDPO will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and those we come in to contact with. To enable this, HDPO will appoint the Director of Operations as the safeguarding designated person who is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is given high priority within HDPO and that all safeguarding reports are dealt with in a timely manner. Any staff reporting genuine concerns or complaints (or if they request it) will be protected. HDPO will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, service users/beneficiaries, suppliers & vendors and official bodies.

Another channel is a whistleblower channel. The channel operates both a dedicated 24/7 phone number and a dedicated email. Through this channel the identity of the complainant can be protected. Cases of violations reported through this channel are always followed up. However, the advice line offers an alternative route if whistleblowing internally is difficult or professionals have concerns around how matters are being handled.

### **Response**

HDPO will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations. HDPO has created a dedicated investigative unit. That unit is

responsible for investigating cases of abuse and all other violations. HDPO will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy. It is HDPO policy to report all crimes to the relevant law enforcement authorities unless doing so may pose a risk to anyone involved in the case.

Within its means, HDPO will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). This could include consultation with a qualified counsellor, medical assessment or assistance or personal protection such as relocation. Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor. HDPO is in other words committed to the idea of restorative justice. HDPO will also offer help to the victim/survivor to mitigate the physical and emotional damage that the abuse has inflicted and the organization will also provide a platform for mediation between victim/survivor and perpetrator if both consents.

### **Governance and Accountability**

HDPO has integrated safeguarding into project and enterprise design. It has successfully created an ethos that has the safety of children adolescents and adults with special needs. All of these efforts are lead from the top. The directors have a direct responsibility for the safeguarding of employees and beneficiaries. Governance & Accountability standards create, foster and ensure safeguarding through requisite controls and oversight. They identify the responsibility of those who are custodians of the organization's values ensuring people are put first. The boards of HDPO have a supervisory role. Issues with regard to safeguarding and integrity are discussed regularly. Most importantly, CEO has taken the ultimate responsibility for supervising the safeguarding efforts of HDPO upon himself. In doing so he has made explicit and formal what was already a reality for forty years. The CEO has made the safeguarding of employees and beneficiaries against abuse a foundational aim of HDPO from its beginnings.



Dr. Ahmed Idris  
Executive Director

