



Striving for a healthy and inclusive society

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

AUGUST 2022

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy serves to ensure that all partners and employees of Health Development Initiative (hereinafter HDI) are aware that discrimination is an unacceptable practice incompatible with HDI values and a violation of the law. This policy is guided by International and Regional Human Rights Law, Standards as well as other national laws of Rwanda pertaining to Human Rights.

HDI commits to ensuring inclusion, equality and non-discrimination for all persons in the workplace or in any other context linked to HDI.

HDI commits to respect the diversity of all individuals and their multiple and intersecting identities, fostering an organizational culture characterized by inclusivity, well-being and respect for human rights and creating and maintaining a working environment in which all people are treated with dignity and respect.

HDI commits to enhancing disability inclusion approach across all of its programming.

HDI commits to evaluating its efforts on disability inclusion and rights, including through monitoring of this policy and associated implementation tools, through disability-specific evaluations of programming and operations, and by ensuring disability inclusion and rights promotion are evaluation criteria of mainstream evaluations.

HDI will operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of discrimination in the workplace and in the course of work, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of discrimination.

1. Definitions

Discrimination means *any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference* which is based on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or *other status*, and which has the *purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms.*¹

¹ United Nations Human Rights Committee *General Comment No. 18 Non-discrimination*

Disability inclusion is the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the International Convention to integrate disability-sensitive measures into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes and providing disability-specific initiatives to support the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to any person working with HDI regardless of gender, sexual orientation, position, working relationship with HDI, seniority, marital status or *any other status*. This policy protects current and prospective employees, interns /fellows, contractors and beneficiaries of HDI programmes.

3. Preventive measures

3.1. Trainings

HDI shall organize a mandatory training on human rights for new Staff, interns or fellows (volunteers) as part of induction.

Each year, HDI shall organize at least one refresher training on human rights to its employee, interns or fellows. HDI shall also sensitize its employees, interns, fellows and beneficiaries of HDI's programmes on the prohibition of discrimination and existing reporting mechanisms. In addition, the disciplinary committee shall conduct a risk assessment annually and provide a written report with advice to the HDI management so that discrimination can be prevented at the workplace.

All HDI's employees, interns or fellows and contractors must familiarize themselves with this policy on the prohibition of discrimination and seek guidance or further clarification from the Focal Point in case of doubt or confusion.

3.2. Due diligence

HDI shall conduct due diligence throughout its activities to proactively assess, identify, prevent and mitigate actual and potential adverse human rights impacts to its beneficiaries and partners as well.

HDI shall use due diligence as a way to identify where it can better support and promote individuals' ability to live and exercise their fundamental human rights.

HDI shall develop due diligence tools which would include, but are not limited to, human rights impact assessments, social compliance audits, and legal and regulatory compliance reviews.

4. Focal Point

The Head of Human Rights and Litigation Unit is the focal point for issues relating to human rights related issues. HDI Staff Members, Contractors and Partners have the responsibility to bring human rights issues to the attention of the Head of Human Rights and Litigation Unit, however minor the concerns.

All Staff, Consultants and Partners have the right to contact the Board of Director's if not satisfied with the steps taken by HDI's senior management towards complaints.

5. Reporting discrimination

Any HDI Staff, intern /fellow or contractor who has experienced discrimination is encouraged to either report to the Focal point or to relevant national agencies. In case, the victim opts to report to the relevant national agency, he or she may inform HDI about it.

Any HDI Staff, intern /fellow or contractor who witnesses an act of discrimination or having sufficient evidence must report the incident to the Focal Point.

The reporting might be made in oral or in writing. However the recording of the reporting must be in written and signed by the victim or witness who reported the incident in all circumstances. Beneficiaries who cannot manage to come to HDI's office, they can report through the hotline number 3530.

6. Support to victim of discrimination

HDI will provide any possible support to the victim of discrimination who has reported the incident to the relevant national agency until the matter is resolved by providing sufficient

evidence it may have in its possession. The victim must be informed about the outcome of the internal investigation carried against his or her perpetrator.

7. Protection against retaliation

HDI will support employees, interns or fellows who will be victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or have reported as witnesses of a case of discrimination and will not take any adverse action against them.

8. Sanctions and disciplinary measures

After internal or external investigation, anyone who has been found to have committed the terms of this policy is liable to dismissal from work without notice. The internal investigation will be conducted by the Disciplinary Committee.

The following sanctions will be applied to those who condone discrimination by either failing to report the incident or assist the alleged perpetrator in concealing evidence or threatening the victim /survivor:

- Verbal or written warning
- Suspension
- Dismissal

HDI will terminate employee, intern /fellow or contractor's contract who is found guilty in a court of law for discriminating against his or her colleague, intern or fellow, contractor or beneficiaries of HDI programmes, even if HDI has not conducted its own investigation.

9. Implementation and dissemination

All HDI employees, interns /fellows and contractors shall receive a soft copy of this policy via email and will be required to acknowledge its receipt. This policy is part and parcel of any contractual agreement between HDI and employees, interns /fellows and contractors. Henceforth, the policy will have the same effect as that of the contract signed by the employee, fellow, intern or contractor.