



Striving for a healthy society

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

UPDATED JUNE 2020

POLICY STATEMENT

Health Development Initiative (hereinafter HDI) is committed to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults that come into contact with our work. All complaints or allegations of any misconduct will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. No one will be victimised for making such a complaint /reporting misconduct.

2. PRINCIPLES

- *All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection from harm.*
- *Everybody has a responsibility to safeguard children or/and vulnerable adults.*
- *Organisations have a duty of care to children, vulnerable adults with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.*
- *If organisations work with partners, churches, Community Based Organisations, Civil Society Organisations they have a responsibility to help them meet the minimum requirements on safeguarding.*
- *All actions on safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult, which are paramount.*

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Child: any person under the age of 18 years

vulnerable adults: Anybody over 18 that has particular care, support or special needs or when the person is dependent or reliant on others. Conflict and disasters might also be the cause of some of these short term or long term vulnerabilities. A vulnerable adult is also whoever identifies themselves as unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves from harm/exploitation or who is marginalised by the society or the state.

Safeguarding: Protecting an individual from harm. Harm includes any form of bullying, harassment, exploitation and abuse or other act that causes injury or suffering.

Sexual abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation : Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual harassment: Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another.

Harassment: Any unwanted behaviour (verbal, physical conduct or gesture) that offends, intimidates or humiliates another person.

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. it may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Neglect and negligent treatment: persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It may

also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a child with disability.

Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on mental wellbeing and mental health. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child or a vulnerable adult in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

Vulnerability: is the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of disasters or poverty.

Vulnerable groups: for our context vulnerable groups include; women of reproductive; Adolescents and youth; Historically marginalized communities; People living with HIV/AIDS; LGBTI persons; Female and Male sex workers; Persons with disabilities; Substance users and addicted individuals; Refugees; Young housemaids (female and male); People who are incarcerated and children.

This policy applies to HDI Board members, staff, interns, volunteers, fellows and contractors

All allegations of harm including the findings of the investigation will be kept in a register. Information in the log incident register shall be kept confidential.

The Executive Director will be the Safeguarding Focal Point. The main responsibility of the Safeguarding Focal Point is to ensure that allegations are responded to and appropriate action taken

when necessary. In case, the allegations are made against the Executive Director, they will be reported to the Board.

HDI will apply the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies across the organization. HDI will conduct pre-selection checks before the recruitment of staff, interns, fellows/volunteer and contractors.

Candidates will be checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of safeguarding. A minimum requirement of a least two references will be carried out in all cases. Prospective staff, intern, volunteer or fellow after will be required to produce a criminal clearance from the National Public Prosecution Authority.

7.2. Trainings and briefings

All staff, interns, volunteers and fellows will receive safeguarding training to help them understand why it is necessary to safeguard and protect children and to be fully aware of the procedure for reporting concerns.

Staff will receive a short induction on safeguarding at the time of their engagement with the organisation. Staff with particular responsibilities relating to safeguarding will be provided with a more in-depth training within 6 months of their engagement. Contractors will be briefed on safeguarding and their responsibilities under the policy upon engagement with the organisation.

Children and families will be informed on the HDI's commitment to safeguarding and what to do if they have concerns about a child.

All staff and children will become aware of the designated Safeguarding Focal Point who is responsible for receiving reports of concerns and advising on assessing and mitigating risk in line with HDI's policy and procedures.

HDI shall regularly organize continuous /refresher training to Staff, interns, fellows and volunteers.

A risk assessment shall be conducted prior to conduct any operation, programme and project activity that involves children, young persons or vulnerable adult persons and approved by the Focal person or any staff with delegated powers. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimise the risk to children, and vulnerable adults and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

A risk assessment check-list will be developed by HDI.

7.5. Safe Communications – use of images and children’s information

HDI shall ensure that its use of social media does not negatively impact on children and vulnerable adults. HDI shall conduct a risk assessment prior to use social media to ensure that it does not negatively impact on children and vulnerable adults.

All HDI staff, interns, fellows, volunteers and contractors shall report any concerns or incidents to the Safeguarding Focal Point.

All complaints or allegations of any abuse or misconduct will be treated seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately with in confidentiality. The priority will always be the safety and best interest of the beneficiary.

Any identifying information about children or vulnerable adults will be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis only. Any staff who raises concerns of serious malpractice will be protected as far as possible from victimisation or any other detrimental treatment if they come forward with serious concerns, provided that concerns are raised in good faith.

Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offence and will be investigated.

The alleged perpetrator and all witnesses must cooperate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality will be protected and information which could identify them will be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis only.

A document to manage and investigate safeguarding complaints will be created to provide guidance and ensure appropriate action is taken.

If a staff, intern, fellow or volunteer has any reason to suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being subjected to harassment, sexual abuse or exploitation or any other harm, then these steps must be followed:

The victim or any other interested person shall report the matter to the Executive Director Dr. Kagaba Aflodis through telephone number **+250788 305 117** or use an email: kagaba@hdirwanda.org

- He will assess the nature of the allegations
- Refer the allegation to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation. The Disciplinary Committee shall interview with the alleged perpetrator and the potential witnesses and the alleged victim. The interview will be conducted separately.
- The Disciplinary Committee shall report the findings including recommendations to the Executive Director further actions.

If an allegation is made against a Staff, intern, fellow/volunteer, HDI will act swiftly and there will a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

However if the allegations are against the Executive Director, the alleged victim or any other interested person shall report the case to the Board member Attorney Christian Garuka using his contact phone number +250 788 776 600 or email :chrisgaruka@gmail.com who will further conduct thorough investigations and refer the case to the Board of directors.

- **PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION**

This policy protects HDI employees, interns/fellows, contractors or anyone interacting with HDI who report any harmful act or act suspected to cause harm from retaliation. Protective measures as stipulated under the Whistle-blower Policy shall be followed.

HDI will receive disclosures from children with sensitivity and will strive not to re- traumatise children in their handling of complaints. If a child or young person tells you they are being, or have been, abused:

- Listen to and accept what the child or young person says but do not press for information.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Do not investigate and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser.
- Take the alleged abuse seriously.
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- **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.

- **REVIEW AND UPDATE**

At the end of each year, the Board shall review the implementation of this policy and if necessary will update it accordingly.