

Date of Revision
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Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy



HUJRA Village Support Organization
A company set up under section 42 of the companies Act, 2017

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with HUIRA VSO. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with HUIRA VSO.
- The design and implementation of HUIRA VSO's programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by HUIRA VSO, and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under HUIRA VSO's Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by HUIRA VSO or associated personnel

Why a Child Protection Policy?

- Every child has the right to be protected from any form of abuse, violence, injury, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation. Holistic Understanding for Justified Research and Action (HUIRA) works to create a safe environment for children who benefit from our various projects.
- Children and young people need protection and safeguarding. First of all, they need protection from the effects of poverty, disadvantage, exclusion and violence. Besides these economic, social, and political problems, individual children might also be at risk from other forms of abuse by adults or other children. In this policy HUIRA is concerned specifically with the protection of children who are in contact with HUIRA staff members or representatives.
- This policy sets out HUIRA's common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protecting children.
- This policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Directors of HUIRA. It applies to all staff.
- It is essential that all staff, volunteers, partners, international organizations, beneficiaries, donors and the general public are aware of its central messages and any duties/responsibilities it places on them.
- This policy is also available in Khmer language
- This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or when necessary.

HUIRA VSO Prohibits any Form of Child Abuse

- All children have equal rights to be protected from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin colour, disability, religion or beliefs
- Child abuse is never acceptable. Neither is, knowing of a child being abused without taking appropriate action.
- HUIRA identifies the following types of child abuse:

Physical abuse: Any physical punishment and abuse to children like beating (including with a stick or other implement), poisoning, shaking, pushing and anything that would deliberately harm the physical well-being of children.

Mental or emotional abuse: Any actions (gestures, words and behavior) that deliberately affects a child's mental/emotional well-being for example by making them afraid, anxious, annoyed or discouraged.

Neglect: Any actions that are aimed to deliberately harm children in their four essential rights (right to live, right to learn, right to participate and the right to speak).

Sexual abuse: Any action with sexual intent towards children such as touching children's genitals, coercing the child to have sex, or forcing children to watch or take part in pornography.

Spiritual abuse: Any actions by a spiritual leader, or someone with spiritual power or authority (weather organization, institution or family), misusing their power or authority with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child.

Code of Practice and Behaviour

- All staff, volunteers, visitors, donors, guests or other stakeholders of HUIRA are strongly expected to treat all children and other staff members with respect and dignity.
- Staff should promote a culture of openness where issues and concerns can be raised and discussed.
- Each individual must sign a statement to say that they have read the Child Protection Policy, will respect it and understand that action will be taken in case of inappropriate behavior.
- There is a designated person who is responsible for dealing with Child Protection issues in the organization as a whole. These persons should be known to all children and staff.
- Information on the Child Protection Policy shall be introduced before and on acceptance of employment of DT staff
- New staff will receive training on child protection before being put in a position of trust; staff will be offered refresher trainings annually, conducted by the Research and Advocacy focal person.
- Child protection will be a point of discussion in the evaluation of new staff at the end of their probation period
- Child protection will be a point of discussion in the yearly staff evaluation
- If protocols are broken the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her job.
- Staff should be aware of any sign of abuse of children (in physical appearance, behavior, material possessions and communication of children) and report any suspicion to the CPO.
- Staff and others can only provide discipline through appropriate verbal means and must never use physical means.
- Staff and others are not allowed to use language, make suggestions or offer any type of advice which is offensive, inappropriate or abusive.
- In order to establish appropriate physical boundaries, one must never touch a child in a way that is against the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A general guideline is not to touch areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt. This also includes kissing, massaging or tickling in an inappropriate way.
- The child with disabilities will have the same physical personal protection
- Staff and others must never do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Staff and others must never develop sexual relationships with children.
- Staff and others are not allowed to be alone with a child in the project area or outside it. If one is alone with a child, he/she should always be visible to others. If it involves a private meeting, they have to meet in a public place or in an office with opened windows, and inform a project coordinator or other member of the management team when and where the meeting will take place.
- Any staff, volunteers, visitors and other guests are not permitted to take a child who is not their offspring to their place of residence
- Adults are always responsible of their behavior and cannot blame the child even if the child provokes or acts in a seductive way.
- Staff and others must never act in ways to shame, degrade or humiliate children or use any other form of emotional abuse
- Staff should never create dependency and discrimination of a child through preferable treatment by giving gifts or money.
- Staff should organize awareness raising workshops with children to define acceptable and unacceptable behavior with adults.

- Communities and children with whom HJJRA works will be informed of the Child Protection Policy and will be assured that support will not be discontinued if they report suspicious behavior.
- Case management files and child records are strictly confidential (see staff policy) and are kept in a safe place. Access to these files can only be granted by the ED and the respective managers.

Recruitment and Screening:

HJJRA expects all staff to protect children from abuse and will be screened before beginning work. Screening is equally important for volunteers/interns, board members and advisors. Anyone applying for a position with HJJRA must apply form or resume, including a work or personal history.

On applying for a position, a form must be signed agreeing to the Child Protection Policy and stating that he/she has not had any previous convictions for child abuse or violent behaviour, or if he/she has ever been dismissed from a job for abuse.

References shall be checked preferably by telephone to give previous employers an opportunity to express concerns verbally. If deemed necessary, HJJRA can ask for an official Certificate of Good Conduct (police clearance). After references have been verified, a personal interview will be conducted to confirm the candidate's suitability.

If found out after recruitment that the employee has provided false information and indeed has previously been convicted for child abuse or violent behavior or dismissed from previous jobs for abuse, this will lead to immediate dismissal.

Communication on Child Protection and Abuse

External

- HJJRA is committed to inform children, decision makers, and the public, also through the media, that child abuse and keeping silent in case of witnessing child abuse, is wrong and unacceptable.
- Staff should never make comments on child protection matters to the media without consulting the Chief Executive Officer and BoD Member before.
- This Child Protection Policy aims to enable a safe and positive environment for children and is foundational in the education, research and advocacy initiatives that the HJJRA will be involved in.
- HJJRA is committed to educate and inform its stakeholders about the importance implementing prevention measures regarding child protection. In doing so, children are protected from abuse that could be realized by staff, volunteers, visitors and others involved in HJJRA.

Internal

- HJJRA provides opportunities in its internal meetings to discuss and learn about child abuse and neglect with its entire staff. HJJRA is committed to raise and discuss these issues also in meetings with others partners and networks.
- New HJJRA staff will receive training on child protection before being put in a position of trust; staff will be offered refresher trainings annually, conducted by the designated focal person.
- All staff and volunteers will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy when they start their contract with HJJRA.
- HJJRA is committed to discuss children's rights and child abuse in the communities in which it works, including with the children themselves.
- Every project in HJJRA shall have means for the children involved to anonymously express their claims and concerns regarding abuse.

What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programs.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

Scope

- All staff contracted by HUIRA VSO.
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to HUIRA VSO, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

Policy Statement

HUIRA VSO believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. HUIRA VSO will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding [as appropriate]: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

HUIRA VSO commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

HUIRA VSO responsibilities

HUIRA VSO will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all its programs and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with HUIRA VSO. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Staff responsibilities

Child safeguarding

HUIRA VSO staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

Adult safeguarding

HUIRA VSO staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults.
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

HUIRA VSO staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, HUIRA VSO staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an HJJRA VSO staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

Response

HJJRA VSO will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in Associated Policies).

HJJRA VSO will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.

HJJRA VSO 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). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

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 should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Glossary of Terms

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from HJJRA VSO's program. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

A person below the age of 18

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

Safeguarding

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programs. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmers, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialize. Those systems must be survivor-centered and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the center of all we do.

Sexual abuse

The term ‘sexual abuse’ means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means 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. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term ‘survivor’ is often used in preference to ‘victim’ as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual’s choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may need care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Response to Allegation of Child/Gender Abuse

HUJRA VSO will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by HUJRA VSO’s Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

HUJRA VSO will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point [as appropriate] or line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate staff member. For example, this could be a senior manager or a member of the HR Team.

Designation	Duty Station	Phone No.	Email
Manager M & E and Coordination	Swat	0946-726799	info@hujra.org
Admin & HR Officer	Peshawar	091-5701206	hr@hujra.org

- HUJRA encourages all staff to adhere to Pakistani law including the labour code.
- All HUJRA staff is encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse in the organization and take seriously any concern raised.
- Any staff who is aware of or has knowledge of another member of staff being involved in child/gender abuse, is obliged to report to the above staff. If found out that he/she has failed to report, appropriate measures will be taken.
- When an allegation of child/gender abuse has been made against a staff member/visitor, HUJRA will investigate it and take appropriate action immediately to deal with the situation.
- Positive steps will be taken to ensure the protection and needed care of the child/gender who is subject of the concern
- Both the victim and alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
- Gender/ Children’s stories must be heard and taken seriously unless proved otherwise.

- The organization has a reporting procedure where the anti-harassment committee member informs the Chief Executive Officer, BoDs and the respective Manager and others only if necessary in the procedure. Reporting is fully confidential.
- All facts related to the investigation should be reported and this should be carefully and confidentially filed.
- The alleged perpetrator is not allowed to communicate with the child/gender or the child's relatives during the investigation.
- The alleged perpetrator is dismissed of his/her job during the period of the investigation.
- Someone in the organization will be designated to deal with the media and the police. The management teams in each location will decide who this person is. Where possible, consideration will be made beforehand about how they will be informed/involved.
- All persons involved will be informed about the results of the investigation and any action that needs to be taken as a result.
- Once an accusation is found true, the relevant authorities will be informed.
- If found out that the accusation is not true, HJJRA will offer appropriate support to the respective person in dealing with the accusation and its consequences.
- HJJRA VSO encourages relationships/collaboration with other organizations for accountability and support in cases of child/Gender abuse if needed.
- When contacted by organizations that are inexperienced and asking for help from other Child/Gender Rights organizations, HJJRA will answer to their needs up to its capacity.

AGREEMENT AND CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I have read and understood the terms of this policy and I am willing to abide by its direction. I declare that I have no criminal history with offences relating to children/gender and I am allowing HJJRA to perform any background/reference check to verify this.

I understand that if a complaint is brought regarding the abuse of children/gender of any kind while engaged in HJJRA activities, it will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities and I will take the appropriate consequences.

I understand that if I am guilty of any offences of physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual abuse or neglect, I will lose my job without any rights.

I understand that if I do not report any suspicions of abuse involving staff, volunteers, interns, visitors and partners I may suffer appropriate consequences such as the loss of my job without any rights.

Chief Executive Officer:

Signature

Name.....

Date.....

Staff Member:

Signature.....

Name.....

Date.....