



## Safeguarding Policy: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse (PSEAH)

### PURPOSE

Inclusive Development International (IDI) has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH). We believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence and any abuse of power regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, or socio-economic status. The purpose of this policy is to protect people from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with IDI. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of employees, staff, or others associated with IDI (e.g., Interns, Board Members, Volunteers, and Contractors)
- The design and implementation of IDI's programs and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by IDI to prevent and manage Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment incidents and reports. The policy informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace (i.e. by and between employees) – this is governed by IDI's Workplace Harassment Policy (see Employee Handbook).
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by IDI or associated personnel.

### What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

Further information relating to safeguarding is provided in the *Definitions* section.

### SCOPE

The safeguarding policy applies to IDI personnel, including employees, volunteers, members, board members, contractors, interns, and volunteers, during the delivery of IDI's work, including outside of office hours when travelling in country or in communities (e.g., field work).

The policy covers incidents related to IDI project participants, community members, all personnel, accompanying dependents, and partner organizations related to IDI's work or related activities.

## POLICY STATEMENT

IDI believes that everyone we encounter, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, or any other protected characteristic, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

We recognize that our personnel and organization hold a privileged position in our work and that there are unequal power dynamics within our organizations and the communities we work with.

We understand that we are trusted by project participants, communities, partner organizations, personnel, donors, and members of the public to take reasonable measures to prevent, manage the hazards involved in the delivery of our work, and appropriately investigate and report incidents if they occur. IDI has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

IDI personnel are required to contribute to creating a safe and supportive culture where individuals are comfortable in raising concerns and feel assured that all reports will be handled sensitively and appropriately.

### Guiding principles:

**Safeguarding adults and children:** IDI recognizes the intersections between poverty, vulnerability, and discrimination. We also recognize the inequality among genders, between community development practitioners, volunteers and beneficiary communities, and the unequal power dynamics which may also exist within an organization. We recognize that intersections between these factors may create a vulnerability to SEAH. IDI expects personnel in all their interactions to respect diversity, promote gender equality and social inclusion, encourage accountability, and to take a strong "do no harm" approach.

**Act to prevent and report SEAH:** IDI requires that all personnel take measures to prevent the occurrence of SEAH. All personnel are required to report any suspicions or SEAH concerns related to IDI activities or work.

**Shared responsibility and accountability at all levels of the organization:** All IDI personnel at all levels of the organization have a responsibility to contribute to a culture which prevents and encourages reporting of SEAH. Managers at all levels are responsible for support and overseeing the implementation within their respective areas, while the

Board and Executive Director have overall accountability for the implementation of the policy.

**Transparency and accountability:** IDI is committed to ensuring that project participants, personnel, partner organizations and members of the public are able to access information on our policy and know how to report incidents or concerns related to IDI's work. Information is made accessible through IDI contacts and is available on the organization's website ([inclusivedevelopment.net](http://inclusivedevelopment.net)). IDI treats any reports seriously, conducting an investigation whilst maintaining confidentiality and procedural fairness.

**A survivor-centred approach:** IDI prioritizes the rights, wishes, needs, and empowerment of survivors of SEAH in both the prevention of and response to SEAH incidents.

## PREVENTION

### IDI responsibilities

IDI 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 IDI. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programs 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

IDI 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 labor or trafficking

## **Adult safeguarding**

IDI staff and associated personnel must not:

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

## **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

IDI staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity
- Engage in any sexual relationships with community members/beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, IDI 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 IDI staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff/board member

## **ENABLING REPORTS**

IDI 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 will be protected by IDI's Whistleblower Policy.

IDI will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partner organizations, and official bodies.

### **How to report a safeguarding concern**

- 1) Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should follow the same reporting procedure outlined by IDI's Whistleblower policy.
- 2) Members of the public, partner organizations, and official bodies may make complaints by contacting the Board of Directors via email:

[complaints@inclusivedevelopment.net](mailto:complaints@inclusivedevelopment.net)

## RESPONSE

IDI will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting concerns in the internal Whistleblower Policy).

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

IDI 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.

IDI will take action against anyone, whether they are the subject of a complaint or not, who seek or carry out retaliatory action against complainants, survivors or other witnesses.

## 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 always be stored and transmitted in a secure manner.

### **Associated policies**

Code of Conduct

Workplace Harassment policy

Whistleblower policy

## DEFINITIONS

### **Child/Children**

A person below the age of 18 years old.

### **Fraternization**

Any relationship that involves, or appears to involve, partiality, preferential treatment, or improper use of rank or position including but not limited to voluntary sexual behavior. It could include sexual behavior not amounting to intercourse, a close and emotional relationship involving public displays of affection or private intimacy and the public expression of intimate relations.

## **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

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

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 programs 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. It covers sexual offenses including but not limited to: attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual kissing and touching). All sexual activity with a minor child is considered to be sexual abuse.

### **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.

### **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is *unwelcome* conduct of a sexual nature.

“Conduct of a sexual nature” may include, but is not limited to:

- requests for sexual favors;
- lewd or derogatory comments or jokes;
- comments regarding sexual behavior or the physical characteristics of another employee;
- sexually-oriented comments, innuendo, catcalls, whistles, and other non-verbal expression;
- sexually-oriented communications or representation in letters, notes, emails, invitations, photographs, cartoons, articles, or other written or pictorial materials;
- repeated requests or invitations for dates or similar social contacts after reasonable notice that they are unwelcome;
- retaliating against an employee for refusing a sexual advance or reporting an incident of possible sexual harassment;
- offering or providing favors or employment benefits such as promotions, favorable evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, etc., in exchange for sexual favors; and
- any unwanted physical touching, brushing against, blocking or impeding movements, and assaults.

### **Transactional Sex**

The exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors.

### **Victim/Survivor**

The person who has been abused, harassed, 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.