

# Safeguarding Policy

*Approved by Board through Resolution dated 28 July 2020*

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Outlines the guidelines to ensure that Women's Fund Asia (WFA) will undertake all steps required to safeguard and provide protection to people, particularly children, "at risk" adults and Third Parties from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with any Team Member or Associated Personnel of WFA.
- 1.2 Informs Team Members and Associated Personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding such vulnerable cohorts; and
- 1.3 Mandates the creation of an Action Plan for ensuring the implementation of safeguarding actions and compliance with this policy.

## 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 WFA has a zero-tolerance policy for violence, abuse, exploitation, and will ensure that everyone WFA comes into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation. While WFA is not a child rights' organisation or works directly with children, it will act on reported incidents from reliable sources in relation to any violations of child rights, particularly in relation to any perpetration by Team Members or Associated Personnel of WFA.
- 2.2 The Action Plan developed by WFA will provide for child safeguarding, adult safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
- 2.3 The WFA Code of Conduct lays, founded on its Values, envisages zero tolerance to violence, abuse, and exploitation of vulnerable groups or communities by its Team Members or Associated Personnel of WFA.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy, terms appearing herein will have the following meanings.
  - a. Safeguarding: proactive provision of steps and measures to ensure protection to and for children, "at risk" persons and Third Parties against abuse and exploitation, particularly from those in the direct line of control of WFA.
  - b. Abuse and exploitation: physical, material, or sexual harm caused either directly or indirectly.
  - c. Sexual abuse: includes all acts of non-consensual sex, with any person, including but not restricted to acts with persons who do not have the capacity to give



consent, or have given consent under wrongful information or beyond their circumstances.

- d. Team Members: direct employees, persons with either a short-term or long-term contract of employment or consultancy, volunteers, interns, authorised researchers of WFA.
- e. Associated Personnel: contractors supplying products or services to WFA.
- f. Third Parties: grantees or potential grantees, their field staff, and those who are directly related to them; as well as partners and direct family members of Team Members.

## **4. Commitments**

### **4.1 Prevention**

- a. Conduct reasonably comprehensive background checks on persons being engaged by WFA and ensure proper orientation of incoming Team Members and Associated Personnel to the policy and the Code of Conduct.
- b. Assess possible impacts on these vulnerable cohorts in the implementation of WFA mandate and ensure that the implementation plan contains mitigatory steps.
- c. Undertake periodic refreshers on this policy for Team Members and Associated Personnel and ensure that,
  - i. Disciplinary committees, Senior Management Team, and the Board are well informed on the laws related to abuse and exploitation in the countries of operation.
  - ii. The lack of law in a country does not compromise a response from WFA to the perpetrator/s.
  - iii. Associated Personnel contractually agree to uphold these principles.

### **4.2 Protection**

- a. Ensure a good line of command in over sighting actions of the WFA Associated Personnel in ensuring due conduct in the way they interact with all Third Parties.
- b. Ensure periodic check-in with the Team Members to ensure the information and commitment to professional conduct remains current and present, build understanding on their obligation not only to ensure good conduct for themselves, but also report on any act of abuse, violence, or exploitation in their work as part of WFA.
- c. Ensure that the value and impact of this policy is clearly communicated to grantee partners and they are provided the policy document at the time of signing of the contract. Their obligations and certain rights flowing from the policy should be clearly stated so that any action because of the policy is not

unexpected; and they also know that they can invoke the policy to seek relief and redress if required.

### **4.3 Reporting**

- a. Ensure accessible and effective processes for incident reporting, including confidence building, for ease of reporting.
- b. Maintaining confidentiality during the investigation and inquiry, and transparency in the decision-making process. It will also ensure clarity to the complainant and the accused on the capacity of WFA in the steps it can take, as well as the relief it can provide, transparency with the complainant on processes initiated and completed, provision of legal advice to those affected if they wish for legal recourse outside of the capacity of WFA, commitment to principles of natural justice and ensuring that all voices are heard in the process of both inquiry and decisions.

### **4.4 Response**

WFA will ensure an integrated response to the issue of ensuring safeguarding of Third Parties from its Team Members, by putting in place adequate disciplinary measures, including handing over the matter to the authorities. It commits to following through on its legal obligations in countries where there is a possibility of larger response; and taking steps to at least hold the personnel accountable to its employment policies, where there is no other measure in place.

## **5. Implementation & Execution**

- a. The Manager (Operations & Human Resource) will be the point person on the integration and implementation of this policy as amongst the Team Members and Associated Personnel. This may include, but not limited to training, orientation, staff discussions, developing materials on the matter.
- b. The Executive Director will work with a nominated member of the Board of Directors in handling all reported incidents in this regard, provided any incident pertaining to a Team Member will be dealt with in terms of the Code of Conduct/contract of engagement.
- c. The Executive Director will report on all actions taken for its execution on a quarterly basis as part of her reporting to the board of directors.