



Safeguarding (Children & Vulnerable Adult) Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Safeguarding is the responsibility that an organization has to ensure that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations, and programs do no harm to children, young people, or vulnerable adults (together referred to as ‘vulnerable people’ under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the organization has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that the organization has for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.

Child protection is a central part of but not separate from safeguarding. It is the process of

protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or a program of work.

It also includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse. Over recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the way in which children, young people, and vulnerable adults can be at risk of discrimination, neglect, abuse, and exploitation by those who are in positions of trust and power over them, including through international development activities.

As a consequence, there has been a significant increase in the efforts made by development organizations to ensure that no harm results from the contact their employees, volunteers, and other representatives have with their target populations or communities.

Through their work, WOYOMO employees, employees of partner organizations, and volunteers may engage with young people and vulnerable adults either directly or indirectly.

WOYOMO recognizes it has an obligation to put in place all reasonable safeguarding measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, including those with whom we work and those in the communities where WOYOMO work is undertaken

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide clarity to **ALL** on how they should engage with children, young people, and vulnerable adults when working for, on behalf of, or in partnership with WOYOMO. It is also to help us make sure that employees, volunteers, and other representatives are protected. It is intended to help us to have a common understanding of safeguarding issues, develop good practice across the diverse and complex areas in which we operate and thereby increase accountability in this crucial aspect of our work

3. Scope

This policy is mandatory for all WOYOMO employees worldwide. For the purposes of this policy, ‘employee’ is defined as anyone who works for or on behalf of WOYOMO, either in a paid or unpaid capacity. This, therefore, includes directly employed staff, trustees, contractors, employees, and volunteers of subcontractors, agency workers, consultants, volunteers, interns, and all visitors to

WOYOMO work programs and offices. It also covers implementing partners whom we fund, and who we expect to work under the policy as a condition of their involvement with WOYOMO.

4.Guiding Principles.

1. **Empowerment** – decisions will be a survivor (victim) led, with the aim to seek informed consent¹ when the survivor is an adult, and obtaining and respecting survivor’s views when they are a child or an adult unable to give informed consent. WOYOMO will endeavour to ensure its communication is in an appropriate language and format.
2. **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs. WOYOMO recognizes the key role that prevention has in safeguarding and will ensure it develops and provides safe services which keep people safe from abuse and exploitation. This includes applying a safeguarding lens to promotional communications and fundraising activities and providing training and support in recognizing abuse.
3. **Protection** – Abusive behaviours in any environment is never accepted. WOYOMO Secretariat, Member Associations, collaborative partners, and other partners will provide services in a manner that does not diminish their safeguarding responsibilities. WOYOMO will have clear channels to enable reporting on a confidential and anonymous (if required) basis. WOYOMO will respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns and provide support and representation to survivors (victims).
4. **Partnership** – WOYOMO delivers its services through local international partners and collaborative partners and recognizes that local communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse. In the spirit of ensuring safeguarding competency throughout all of WOYOMO. WOYOMO will monitor, collaborative partners, and other partners that adhere to safeguarding standards and may need to intervene where these falls below an acceptable standard.
5. **Proportionality** – WOYOMO recognizes that life is not risk-free. WOYOMO will support activities across its collaborative partners, and other partners that identify risks, and mitigate against them, but are not unduly risk-averse. WOYOMO will ensure its responses are proportionate to the circumstances of any incident and the wishes of the survivor (victim), and constitute the least intrusive response appropriate.
6. **Accountability** – WOYOMO will act with integrity, follow due process and be transparent and accountable. WOYOMO will include anonymous safeguarding data in its annual reporting. WOYOMO acknowledges that whilst everyone has responsibility for safeguarding, the Governing Council and Director-General are ultimately accountable for ensuring a safeguarding culture exist at WOYOMO.

5. Implementation.

WOYOMO understand that the rights and protections guaranteed to people under the age of 18, as a matter of international and national law, sometimes differ from the rights of adults. These differences relate to all aspects of human right but require particular approaches in regard to sexual rights. WOYOMO begins from the premise that person under the age of 18 are rights holders, and

that at different points within the spectrum of infancy, childhood and adolescence, certain rights and protections will have greater or lesser relevance.

It shall be the responsibility of the board and Directors of WOYOMO to ensure that this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed accordingly.

WOYOMO will;

- i. Be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding children, vulnerable adults and beneficiaries
- ii. Be up to date on local child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults' legislation and responsibilities.
- iii. Ensure adherence with the WOYOMO Safeguarding Incident Reporting Procedure.
- iv. Ensure all breaches of the Safeguarding Policy are dealt with appropriately and recorded and stored securely with restricted access
- v. Make available evidence of all of the above to the Donors and Partners at request.

Prevention

WOYOMO will:

- a) Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this Policy.
- b) Ensure all staff have read, understood, and adhere to the Code of Conduct and further safeguarding guidance within the WOYOMO Safeguarding Manual.
- c) Design and undertake all its programs and activities in a way that protects children, vulnerable adults, and beneficiaries, from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with WOYOMO. This includes the way in which information about individuals in programs is gathered and communicated and using risk assessments.
- d) Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff and associated personnel.²
- e) Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization but at a minimum to ensure that all volunteers, trustees, and staff are aware that abuse is not tolerated and that all concerns will be recorded and heard.
- f) Ensure managers and supervisors are accountable for ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are fully embedded within their areas of responsibility.
- g) Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of this Policy.
- h) Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by any staff member or associated to WOYOMO Safe Report.

Reporting.

WOYOMO will

- a) Ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available and promoted to staff and the communities we work with. This is through WOYOMO Safe Report, the external incident reporting service through the link provided by WOYOMO.
- b) Ensure all are aware of additional measures required where a concern is about a child or vulnerable adult.
- c) Provide protection to any volunteer, trustee, and staff reporting concerns or complaints in line with whistleblowing principles contained in the human resource manual.
- d) Ensure the Regional Incident Reporting Unit is informed as soon as possible to enable Charity Commission and donors to be alerted as per requirements.

Response

WOYOMO will:

- a) Follow up on safeguarding reports and concerns promptly and according to this policy and WOYOMO procedures, and local legal and statutory obligations.
- b) Apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of either this policy or the Code of Conduct.
- c) Ensure that responses are survivor-focused, keeping the needs of the survivor at the forefront of any investigation process.
- d) Offer support to survivors (victims) of harm caused by staff or anyone associated with WOYOMO, regardless of whether a formal investigation is carried out. An up-to-date list of local organizations and contacts offering support must be available. This list should include but is not limited to information about legal, counselling, medical and psychosocial support. Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor (victim).
- e) Ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the incident and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be kept secure at all times, in line with WOYOMO Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy. Confidentiality should prioritize the survivor rather than the alleged perpetrator and should not be used as an excuse for not responding to a concern.
- f) Ensure quarterly safeguarding updates are given to the Global Incident Reporting Unit and boards where applicable.
- g) Ensure regular review and learning from safeguarding incidents.

6. Grocery of Terms

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival,

development, or dignity of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult. Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts.

Discriminatory abuse: abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or another personal characteristic.

Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse – includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Psychological abuse - includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include not giving a vulnerable person opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.

Child – WOYOMO regards a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives or in their home country. It is widely recognized that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, social and economic status, developmental stage, and dependence on others.

Vulnerable person/people – for the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term that covers children, young people, and vulnerable adults

Vulnerable adult - a person, 18 years and above, who by reason of disability, age, gender, social and economic status, or illness, the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect him or her herself against abuse, harm or exploitation.

Youth or young people - individuals aged 10 to 24 (15 to 35 in some countries) – WOYOMO recognizes that this group spans the categories of ‘children and ‘adults’ but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.