



PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Purpose:

This Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (the "Policy") serves as a cornerstone of our organization's commitment to ensuring the safety and dignity of all individuals with whom we engage. Our organization operates in contexts where marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse, and as such, it is imperative that we uphold the highest standards of protection.

Principles:

Do No Harm: We are dedicated to preventing harm to any individual or community we serve and will take proactive measures to minimize risks associated with sexual exploitation and abuse.

Confidentiality: We respect the privacy and confidentiality of victims, survivors, and those reporting incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Safety: The safety of our participants and community members is paramount, and we will prioritize their well-being in all aspects of our work.

Non-Discrimination: We will not tolerate discrimination or unequal treatment based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, or any other factor.

Victim-Survivor Centered Approach: We will prioritize the needs and rights of victim-survivors, ensuring they have access to appropriate support, information, and services.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy applies to all individuals associated with our organization, including but not limited to staff, volunteers, board members, consultants, and anyone else who interacts with project beneficiaries and community members as part of our programming. It is intended to protect all individuals without discrimination.

3. DEFINITIONS

- **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of power or trust, which results in a sexual act or activity, without the free, informed, and explicit consent of all parties involved. This includes but is not limited to sexual harassment, transactional sex, and abuse of authority.
- **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:** The measures and strategies employed to prevent, respond to, and address incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse within our organization and programs.





- **Complaints Mechanism:** The structured process by which individuals can report incidents or concerns related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Code of Conduct outlines the expected behavior of all individuals associated with our organization in their interactions with project beneficiaries and community members. The Code includes practices to encourage and practices to avoid, firmly aligned with the six Core Principles of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. All staff and associates are expected to adhere to this Code.

5. PROCEDURES

- **Preventing Abuse:** We implement safe recruitment procedures to ensure that individuals with a history of sexual exploitation and abuse are not employed or engaged by our organization.
- **Reporting (Complaints Mechanism):** We maintain a confidential and accessible complaints mechanism that allows staff, project participants, and community members, including children, to report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Responding to Abuse:** Our response includes providing support and advice to victim-survivors and others involved in situations of abuse. In cases requiring investigation, we collaborate with experienced, external entities to ensure a fair, unbiased, and trauma-informed process.
- **Training and Communication:** We communicate and provide training on this Policy and procedures to all stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, children, parents, project participants, and community members.
- **Monitoring Effectiveness:** We regularly monitor and assess the effectiveness of this Policy and related procedures, making necessary improvements as needed.
- **Responsibilities:** All individuals covered by this Policy, including staff, managers, focal points, senior leadership, and board members, have a shared responsibility to enforce and uphold its principles and procedures.

6. COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

a. Introduction:

Our organization is committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and the protection of all individuals, particularly those who may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse within the contexts of our programs. This Complaints Mechanism Policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for receiving, processing, and resolving complaints related to sexual exploitation and abuse within our organization.





b. Mechanism:

- **Identification of Responsible:** AREDO designates a dedicated focal point (Nangialay Hamraz) for managing and overseeing the complaints mechanism. This entity shall remain impartial, trusted, and adequately trained in handling complaints.
- **Clear Policies and Procedures:** Detailed written procedures shall be developed to guide the submission, processing, and resolution of complaints. These procedures will be in compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
- **Accessibility:** Multiple accessible channels will be established to allow all stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, project beneficiaries, and community members, to report incidents. These channels may include dedicated email addresses, phone numbers, physical drop-boxes, or designated personnel.

c. Awareness and Training:

- **Stakeholder Training:** Regular awareness campaigns and training sessions will be conducted to inform all stakeholders about the complaints mechanism. These sessions will include information on how to report incidents, stakeholders' rights and protections, and the confidential nature of the process.
- **Staff Training:** All staff members will receive training on their roles and responsibilities in handling complaints. This training shall emphasize sensitivity and a trauma-informed approach.

d. Reporting and Receiving Complaints

- **Confidential Reporting:** Confidential reporting options shall be made available to individuals who wish to maintain anonymity or are concerned about retaliation.
- **Timely Response:** Acknowledgment of receipt of complaints shall occur within 48 hours.

e. Recording and Documentation

- **Record Keeping:** A secure and confidential record-keeping system shall be maintained to document all complaints, actions taken, and outcomes.
- **Classification:** Complaints shall be categorized based on their severity and nature to prioritize responses.

f. Initial Assessment

- **Assessment Process:** An initial assessment of each complaint shall be conducted to determine its credibility and whether it falls within the scope of our organization's responsibility.
- **Consultation:** Relevant experts or stakeholders may be consulted if necessary to understand the context or potential risks.

g. Investigation

- **Independent Investigator:** Cases requiring investigation shall involve an impartial and experienced external investigator to ensure fairness and objectivity.
- **Witnesses and Evidence:** Evidence, including witness testimonies and relevant documentation, shall be collected.





- **Trauma-Informed Approach:** Investigations shall be conducted with sensitivity, ensuring victim-survivors are treated respectfully and provided with support.

h. Decision and Action

- **Decision-Making:** Based on the investigation findings, informed decisions shall be made on appropriate actions, which may include disciplinary measures, victim support, or policy improvements.
- **Communication:** Outcomes of the investigation shall be communicated to the complainant, ensuring confidentiality is maintained.

i. Follow-Up and Monitoring

- **Follow-Up:** Progress on any actions taken shall be monitored to ensure corrective measures are effectively implemented.
- **Regular Reporting:** Periodic reporting on the status and outcomes of complaints shall be made to senior management and the board of directors.

j. Continuous Improvement

- **Feedback Mechanism:** Stakeholders shall be encouraged to provide feedback on the complaints mechanism to identify areas for improvement.
- **Policy Review:** Regular reviews of the complaints mechanism and related policies shall be conducted to ensure effectiveness and relevance.

k. Confidentiality and Whistleblower Protection

- **Confidentiality:** Strict confidentiality shall be maintained throughout the process to protect the privacy and safety of complainants.
- **Whistleblower Protection:** Protections shall be established for those who report complaints in good faith, and safeguards against retaliation shall be implemented.

7. Signature

I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and commit to upholding the Code of Conduct, principles, and procedures outlined in this Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy.

[Signature] _____

[Printed Name] _____

[Date] _____

