



**ÖKUMENIKUS
SEGÉLYSZERVEZET**

HUNGARIAN INTERCHURCH AID

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Effective: 19. 09. 2023.



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Basic principles

Protecting human dignity and human rights are core values in all our work.

Hungarian Interchurch Aid (*hereafter: HIA*) is committed to providing a safe and trustworthy environment for all those who come into contact with our work.

There is zero tolerance for all forms of abuse, assault, exploitation, harassment, bullying, mistreatment (*together referred to as "abuse"*) within the organization.

In line with the principle of zero tolerance, HIA will initiate the appropriate official procedure in all cases of abuse or suspected abuse.

A breach of the Safeguarding Policy (the "**Policy**") constitutes a material breach of a fundamental obligation arising from the employment relationship with respect to HIA's employees and in **any case will lead to the application of a legal sanction under employment law.**

A breach of the Policy may in itself be grounds for the immediate termination of any cooperative or contractual relationship between HIA and the person who has breached the Policy.

Everyone is entitled to protection, without discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or any other ground.

As the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children's rights is a high priority within the organization, child abuse prevention is covered by a specific policy, HIA's **Child Safeguarding Policy** and as part of it the **Child Protection Code of Conduct.**

Our aim is to prevent those we come into contact with in the course of our work from suffering any type of harm. This includes any harm or damage caused by the conduct of our employees and any type of harm or damage that may result from the design and delivery of our programs and services.

We believe that the protection of human rights is a shared responsibility, and therefore all staff and representatives of HIA must be aware of their own responsibility to prevent abuse and report any observed or suspected abuse.

We also require our partners to conduct their activities in the spirit of this Policy and we provide support in this where necessary.

All complaints and suspicious signs are taken seriously and we respond carefully to reported complaints and signals.

We put the needs and wants of people in need at the centre of our responses when **planning our activities.**

The protection of rights of those concerned is a priority in **complaint handling.** In this context, we ensure **confidentiality** of the protected person, the victim or survivor of the incident and the case,



and we will only share information about the case if the person concerned has consented and the sharing of information does not risk causing further harm or damage.

This obligation of confidentiality and the victim's instruction in this regard shall not be an obstacle to the prevention of a life-threatening situation, to the protection of minors from mental, emotional or physical harm or injury, or to criminal prosecution. - The purpose of confidentiality is to protect the victim, so confidentiality situations should be interpreted with this in mind.

We are committed to supporting victims of abuse and **holding** perpetrators to **account**.

In addition to this Policy, HIA's protection policy includes

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Organisational and Operational Rules
- the Complaints Handling Policy of HIA's representation according to the location where the operation is taking place

Scope of the Policy

The scope of the Policy covers all programs implemented by HIA in the framework of International Development and Humanitarian activities, from the time of the needs assessment, irrespective of the country in which the actual operation is carried out.

The personal scope of the Policy extends to all staff members employed by HIA, experts, other contractual partners and all volunteers working for HIA, and all other organisations with an interest in HIA. HIA will also apply the Policy in its contractual relations and will only choose a contractor that has its own safeguarding policy in line with HIA's or that agrees to comply with HIA's Policy.

The temporal scope of the Policy covers any abuse or suspected abuse detected or reported after its entry into force, irrespective of whether the date of the abuse was earlier. The duration of the Policy is not limited to working hours or to the period during which you are carrying out activities on behalf of HIA, and the Policy applies outside working hours and during holidays.

Definitions

Abuse: abuse is defined as any verbal, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, including in this exploitation and harassment, neglect, mistreatment, or any other action, act, or situation that violates the human dignity or human rights of another person, whether in person, online, or through any other mode, device or medium.

Protected person: all people have an equal right to protection from abuse, so everyone is protected. HIA's Safeguarding Policy focuses first and foremost on those in distress, those who are helped,



supported or have their needs assessed by HIA in the course of its work, those who turn to HIA, and all our staff, volunteers and experts involved in our work.

Victim / survivor: an individual who has experienced or been targeted by abuse, violence, exploitation or neglect.

Our main principles

- We aim to create and maintain an organisational culture that protects against abuse.
- All our staff, volunteers, consultants, external contractors and partners are required to understand and comply with this Policy, and in particular to apply the principle of zero tolerance of abuse in their work.
- We also seek to promote zero tolerance of abuse through our partnerships and we strive to ensure that the partner organisations we work with also have their own safeguarding policies. Where necessary, we help them develop their own internal procedures and codes of conduct.
- All new staff, volunteers and delegates must receive training on this procedure, the complaints mechanism and the responsibilities of the individual.
- We will ensure that all complaints or reports are taken seriously, thoroughly investigated and acted upon to hold the perpetrator accountable and to remedy the harm, damage or injury suffered by the victim.
- When planning our operations, we put the person in need at the centre of our response and take into account their needs, safety and requests. We prioritise the 'do no harm' principle in planning our operations. The safety and well-being of those in need takes priority over protecting the reputation of the organisation.
- All protection measures are ordered in the interest of the person at risk.
- We do our best to help victims of abuse, directly or indirectly, and we are committed to bringing the perpetrator to justice. We aim to ensure that all perpetrators of abuse face prosecution when appropriate.
- During recruitment, we apply safeguarding due diligence to ensure that we do not hire people who pose a known risk.
- We will deal with alleged perpetrators of abuse fairly and in accordance with the law and the present Policy in force.
- Abuses will be reported to the competent authorities in the case of criminal offences without exception, but we will give first priority to the interests, instructions and risks of the person affected.
- We ensure that those we work with are fully aware of the behaviour expected of them. We have designed our complaints policies and procedures to provide the highest level of protection.
- If, on the basis of a notification or investigation, there is a suspicion or evidence of an incident which, in addition to a breach of this Policy, may also constitute a criminal offence or, in the case of an offence against a child, a violation of the law, HIA will report the incident to the competent investigating or safeguarding authority, while informing the parties concerned.



Responsibilities

All persons covered by the Policy: it is the individual responsibility of each person to report any abuse or suspected abuse suffered by any person connected with HIA, in particular but not limited to a person who is supported by HIA, or is intended to be supported by HIA, and who turns to HIA for assistance.

Responsibility of Directors, Team Leaders, Project Managers, Heads of Representation: to ensure compliance and enforcement of the Policy by the persons under their authority, to cooperate with the safeguarding focal person and safeguarding working group to ensure that the Policy is incorporated into the work processes of the department.

Safeguarding Working Group: identifies the main risk factors and the necessary protection measures as a result of a risk analysis. Monitors the implementation of the Policy in work processes. Monitors the allocation of resources required to provide safeguarding measures and, if a shortfall is identified, alerts the appropriate forum. The members of the Safeguarding Working Group as per the Policy are: the Director of the International Development and Humanitarian Department, a delegate from the HR Directorate, one delegate per implementing country.

HR Department: ensures the application of safeguarding aspects in the selection of new staff, coordinates the training of new staff in safeguarding issues, participates in the procedure conducted under this Policy in case of suspected abuse.

Safeguarding focal person: responsible for coordinating all the tasks necessary for the implementation and maintenance of this Policy, carries out its regular annual review and may propose amendments to it as a result. Organises the work of the Safeguarding Working Group, ensures the availability of training materials in safeguarding issues, ensures that, in the event of an alert of abuse, proceedings are initiated under the Policy, and draws up an annual report on the protection measures taken during the period under review. Manages the central e-mail account for notifications and liaises with the colleagues managing the e-mail address for notifications in the foreign offices.

The safeguarding focal person from the date of entry into force of these rules for an indefinite period: Kinga Dékány dr. In the event of her absence, her replacement shall be appointed by the Director of the International Development and Humanitarian Department.

Handling notifications

We deal with all incoming notifications concerning protection, in whatever form, language or channel, investigate the facts reported and do our utmost to investigate them, as appropriate. Anyone is entitled to make a notification and no one should be disadvantaged by making a safeguarding report. A notification can also be made anonymously.



It is not the responsibility of the notifying person to investigate the facts or to make sure that the suspicions are well founded.

Anyone who becomes aware of information that suggests abuse has occurred should report it using one of the contact details below:

Budapest HIA HQ:

e-mail address: safeguarding@hia.hu

Ukraine:

e-mail address: complaint.ukr@hia.hu

phone number: +380681423861

Ethiopia:

e-mail address: safeguarding@hia.hu

Iraq:

e-mail address: safeguarding@hia.hu

Afghanistan:

e-mail address: safeguarding@hia.hu

The above contact details should be indicated as channels for reporting abuse on HIA's websites and on any leaflets or other communication materials containing contact details.

If the notification is received by HIA in any other way than the above, in particular but not limited to being sent to a staff member, volunteer, a contracted or cooperating partner in any form, the recipient of the notification shall automatically and immediately, but no later than 24 hours after its detection, forward it to the e-mail address safeguarding@hia.hu, with simultaneously informing the notifier.

If the notification is received at an address other than safeguarding@hia.hu, the account administrator of the recipient account must automatically and immediately forward the notification to safeguarding@hia.hu, while informing the notifier.

Handling a report of abuse takes priority over all other workflows!

Within 24 hours of receipt of the notification, the safeguarding focal person responsible for the safeguarding@hia.hu e-mail account will start an investigation of the content of the report and contact the notifier. If he/she detects or suspects an emergency situation on the basis of the notification, he/she shall immediately inform the Director of the International Development and



Humanitarian Department as his/her superior, and, in consultation with him/her, take the necessary and effective action to remedy the situation.

Investigation

Principles to be followed in the conduct of the investigation

- The investigation must always be conducted with a victim-centred approach and in connection with each procedural act it must be examined whether the person against whom the abuse was committed is at risk, danger or disadvantage. At all times, the alleged victim of the abuse should be treated with consideration and his or her consent should be obtained as far as possible in any procedural steps involving him or her.
- If the person against whom the abuse has been committed is known or becomes known in the course of the proceedings, his or her consent to the proceedings must be obtained; this does not apply where a criminal offense is suspected - in such cases, a report must be made to the competent investigative authority, and the person concerned must be informed.
- The notifier must be protected from victimisation and it must be ensured that he or she does not suffer any harm as a result of making the notification.
- A person suspected of having committed an offence must be guaranteed the presumption of innocence and a fair procedure at all times. He or she should be informed of all procedural steps and, where appropriate, be allowed to participate in them, unless this would cause disproportionate harm to the victim, considering the victim's best interests. In such cases, the procedural steps shall be documented as fully as possible and the documentation shall be made available to the person subject to the proceedings. In the interests of a fair trial, the possibility of confrontation should be provided in the event of conflicting factual allegations. The result of the investigation should be established only after the facts have been clarified as fully as possible. The employee suspected of having committed an abuse should be informed of the legal remedies available to him/her. Facts which have not been established balance of probabilities shall not be imputed to any person. If, as a result of the investigation, it is established that the allegation is unfounded, the fact should be given the same publicity as the allegation.
- Making a false statement of fact or false allegation in a notification or in the course of proceedings, whether intentionally or through gross negligence, is also an abuse.

Conducting an investigation

Upon receipt of a notification of safeguarding nature, the investigation procedure presented under this chapter shall be initiated without delay, but no later than 3 working days after the receipt of the notification by the safeguarding focal person. The initiation of the procedure shall be the responsibility of the safeguarding focal person.

The investigation is initiated by the safeguarding focal person by means of a Record of the investigation. The Record shall contain the exact manner and date of the notification, a list of the



members of the investigative committee, an invitation to the first meeting of the committee and, if immediate action is required, a proposal for such action.

The safeguarding focal person shall deliver the Record to the members of the Committee in person or by electronic means no later than 72 hours after receipt of the notification. The first meeting of the investigative committee shall be held no later than 5 working days after the receipt of the notification by the safeguarding focal person.

The Director of the International Development and Humanitarian Department shall decide on the implementation of immediate investigative measures as soon as possible, on the basis of a proposal from the safeguarding focal person.

The safeguarding focal person ensures that, if a donor-funded project in the context of the case can be identified, the relevant grant manager is informed of the procedure so that, if there is an obligation to do so, a notification can be sent to the donor concerned. The notification should contain just the basic facts in an anonymized manner and the actions that HIA is planning to take.

It is also the safeguarding focal person's duty and responsibility to report any violations of criminal law or violations against children to the competent criminal investigating or safeguarding authorities. In all cases, the report can only be sent with the prior approval of the investigating committee.

The members of the investigating committee are selected from the following persons:

- Person delegated by HIA's President-Director
- Director of the International Development and Humanitarian Department
- relevant team leader
- responsible project manager
- in the case of a Hungarian staff member working in HIA's HQ or serving abroad, the HR staff member designated by the Head of the HR Department
- in case of the involvement of a staff member of HIA's representation abroad, the competent HR staff

The investigating committee consists of minimum 3 maximum 5 people.

The investigative committee's task is to conclude the investigation as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the first meeting, and to record the findings of the investigation in the investigation report. In particularly complex cases, the duration of the investigation may be extended but the reasons for this must always be recorded in writing.

Within 5 working days of the adoption of the minutes, the President-Director shall take a decision in the form of a resolution setting out the tasks to be carried out in each area, the person responsible for each of them and the time limit.

Within one week of the expiry of the time limit laid down in the decision, the safeguarding focal person shall carry out a follow-up examination of the implementation of the decision and shall inform the President-Director by means of a memo.



At its first meeting, the investigative committee shall determine the course of the investigation, in particular, but not exclusively, the documents, recordings, material evidence to be obtained and the persons to be heard. They shall also determine the assistance to be given to the victim with her / his consent.

The organisation of the investigation and the documentation of the investigative committee's activities are the responsibility of the safeguarding focal person.

The safeguarding focal person will be in contact with the notifier and the victim.

If the safeguarding focal person or any member of the investigative committee is concerned or biased by the facts of the reported case or if for any reason the impartial and professional performance of his/her duties is compromised, he/she shall immediately report this to the Director of International Development and Humanitarian Department (in the case of the safeguarding focal person) or to the safeguarding focal person in other cases. In the event of bias on the part of the Director for International Development and Humanitarian Department, the President-Director, in the case of the HR Officer, the HR Director, in all other cases the Director for International Development and Humanitarian Department shall designate the alternate.

Recruitment and selection

Before signing a contract of employment or accepting a volunteer application, the applicant's official certificate of good conduct must be obtained. The same procedure shall be followed if HIA enters into a contract for a service as a result of which the service provider's staff member will come into contact with the persons identified as target groups or beneficiaries of the project or activity in question on behalf of HIA. In such cases, the service provider is obliged to present the official certificate of good conduct to HIA in respect of all persons coming into direct contact with the target group/ beneficiaries. In the case of recruitment abroad, the presentation of a document equivalent to the Hungarian official certificate of good conduct is required.

HIA is entitled to make a copy of the official certificate of good conduct or its equivalent abroad and keep it in the personnel file or with the contract. Hereafter, the provisions of the Data Management Policy shall apply.

Criteria to consider when recruiting staff:

- safeguarding aspects should be discussed at the job interview if the prospective employee will be working directly with children, vulnerable groups or communities at risk;
- HIA will seek to claim references and letters of recommendation if the prospective employee will be working directly with children, vulnerable groups, at-risk communities and is not a first-time jobseeker;
- qualifications required for the job have to be presented - original certificates;
- a probationary period is required for all new employees;

Prior to contracting with service providers who will be in direct contact with the target groups and beneficiaries, efforts should be made to ensure that the CVs, previous work experience, references and necessary certificates of the persons who will actually provide the service are available.



Transfer of knowledge

All new employees are required to attend the Safeguarding training within 30 days of joining and to report on their knowledge by completing a questionnaire. Any updates or changes to the Safeguarding Policy must be distributed to all staff.

Staff members are required to attend refresher training at regular intervals and to report on their knowledge by completing a questionnaire.

The responsibility for providing information about the training obligation, making training material available and keeping records of training and refresher training is the responsibility of the HR Department, while the responsibility for compiling training material lies with the safeguarding focal person.

Once the training has been completed, the completed questionnaire must be sent to the safeguarding focal person, who will determine whether the employee's safeguarding knowledge is adequate and inform the HR Department's records. Questionnaires that are duly completed shall be destroyed by the safeguarding focal person, while those found to be inadequate shall be returned to the person completing the questionnaire and discussed in person with him/her on the subject of safeguarding knowledge.

At the time of contracting, the person responsible for procurement, tendering and contract preparation must ensure that the contracting partner is aware of the contents of the Policy and declares in the contract that it will comply with it or share its own safeguarding policy with HIA. It is the responsibility of the safeguarding focal person to determine the equivalence of the partner's safeguarding policy. In the case of equivalent safeguarding principles, this should be stated in the text of the contract. In the lack of equivalent safeguarding principles at the partner, the partner must undertake in the contract to be familiar with the relevant HIA policies, to act in the spirit of them and to take a position of total prohibition with regard to all types of abuse, in particular sexual abuse and harassment.

Enforcement of safeguarding aspects in fundraising and communication

Respecting the human dignity and promoting the fulfilment of beneficiaries and target groups is also a top priority in our communication activities. We always consider target group members and beneficiaries as equal partners in action. When communicating with the public, we present an objective picture of the situation, where we emphasise the abilities and aspirations of the target groups, beneficiaries and not their vulnerability and fear. When working with the press to increase public willingness to donate, we must not give in to external or internal demands that seek to prioritise publicity over the principle of maximising overall aid. We must avoid competing for publicity with other humanitarian organisations in situations where such publicity could be detrimental to the service we provide to beneficiaries or could jeopardise the safety of our staff or beneficiaries.



Information Sharing

HIA is committed to informing its beneficiaries and, in the implementation of all its programs, it places emphasis on informing all persons in its field of vision so that they are aware of the risks of abuse and the channels of reporting and possible protection measures in case of abuse. HIA operates secure reporting channels to ensure the protection of the personal data of the reporting party and to promote the widest possible awareness of these channels. The aim is to ensure that all persons coming into contact with HIA are directly informed and made aware of the risks and risks of abuse.

Maintenance of the Policy

The Policy shall be reviewed and updated as necessary, at the earliest in the first quarter of each year. It is updated based on the experience, risks, lessons learned and knowledge gained from partners during the year. It is the responsibility of the safeguarding focal person to organise the review of the Policy.

Budapest, 19. September 2023.

László Lehel
President-Director
Hungarian Interchurch Aid