



THEODORA ANAVHE ADAMU FOUNDATION (TAAF)

Safeguarding Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The projects and programs that TAAF implements address the needs of Vulnerable/Marginalized communities and groups. There is potential for abuse to take place in the context of these projects and programs.

Through its mission, TAAF is well positioned to promote and ensure good practice by its staff and by with those of its partners who directly or indirectly work with women and girls.

The aim of this policy is:

- To promote and ensure the safeguarding of women and girls (especially when pregnant) directly served by TAAF.
- To ensure that any abuse of women and girls that occurs in the context of TAAF projects and programs is reported and addressed.

2. VULNERABLE/MARGINALIZED /MARGINALIZED PERSONS COVERED BY THE POLICY

- All children and young people below the age of eighteen years should be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence and adheres to the fundamental rights of the child as spelled out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.
- Vulnerable/Marginalized adults, pregnant women and girls (whether married or unmarried with unintended pregnancy), persons over the age of eighteen years who are unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation for whatever reason, require particular protection.

- Both children and Vulnerable/Marginalized adults (hereinafter referred to as the “**Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons**”) have rights as individuals and shall be treated with dignity and respect.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Board are responsible for:

- Ensuring adequate measures are in place to assess and address safeguarding risks.
- Putting in place adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, including relevant HR matters.
- Making sure policies and procedures are effectively applied in practice and that mechanisms are in place to provide assurance on compliance.
- Ensuring those safeguarding policies, practice, and performance are robustly and regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose.
- Actively promoting a safe culture and strong awareness of everyone’s safeguarding responsibilities.
- Taking steps to help deter and prevent safeguarding issues from occurring.
- Ensuring there are mechanisms in place to promptly identify and act upon emerging safeguarding trends or issues.
- Ensuring that serious incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Strategic Management Team is responsible for:

- Ensuring the policy is implemented.
- Discussing safeguarding matters at Strategic Management Team meetings at periodic intervals to help ensure progress and address any challenges with implementing the policy and any cases arising.
- Presenting an annual safeguarding report on any instances and action taken/lessons learned to the Board.

The Safeguarding Officer is also responsible for:

- Ensuring awareness raising/training is undertaken for staff and stakeholders.

All Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all new employees receive policy training as part of their induction.
- Ensuring measures are implemented within their area of responsibility.

- Following up and addressing issues appropriately.

HR staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the necessary protective procedures when recruiting new staff.
- Documenting who has signed the policy.
- Ensuring that briefing on this policy is built into Induction processes.

All staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Reporting concerns using the Whistleblowing policy and procedures set out in the Code of Conduct.

4. CONTEXT

TAAF expects a commitment and action by its staff and all stakeholders at all levels, to stop and prevent abuse of all periods, especially women and girls who are pregnant.

a. Abuse is any behavior towards a person that causes harm, endangers life or violates rights. Examples of abuse include:

- I. Physical abuse.
- II. Sexual abuse.
- III. Sexual exploitation including:
 - i. Sexual relations with a person below the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent.
 - ii. Use of prostitutes even if locally legal.
- IV. Commercial exploitation, including child labour and modern slavery.
- V. Financial or material – stealing or denying access to money or possessions, expecting favors of any kind in exchange TAAF assets or involvement in a project.
- VI. Emotional abuse.
- VII. Neglect and negligent treatment;
- VIII. Discrimination – abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards age, race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or cultural background.

Promoting and ensuring the protection of Women and girls s from abuse and exploitation is an important element of TAAF's mission.

5. PROTECTING VULNERABLE/MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

a. TAAF staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors (refer to as “staff” hereafter) shall adhere to the following principles:

- I. All women and girls have rights as individuals, without discrimination of any kind and irrespective of race, color, sex, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation, birth or other status.
- II. All women and girls Persons have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- III. All women and girls Persons shall be encouraged to fulfill their potential and inequalities shall be challenged.
- IV. The welfare of women and girls Persons should be safeguarded and promoted.
- V. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of women and girls.
- VI. Non-profit or development organizations have a particular duty of care to the women and girls Persons with whom they work and come into contact with and with whom their representatives work.
- VII. If a non-profit or development organization works through partners they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the Women and girls s involved in their partners’ programmed.
- VIII. Recognition of the importance of working in partnership with TAAF’s Partners in the protection of Women and girls s.
- IX. Staff will be viewed as representatives of TAAF even when not in working hours and their responsibility to act in accordance with this policy therefore applies at all time.

b. TAAF staff shall strive to make TAAF’s activities safe and caring environment(s) for all people, and in particular Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons.

A **Caring Environment** is one:

- I. in which the health, safety and welfare of Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons have been assessed and catered for;
- II. in which staff are aware of the possibility of abuse and take reasonable measures to prevent that possibility; and
- III. where there is a sound and known reporting system for any incident.

c. Activities undertaken by TAAF shall be planned, organized and delivered in accordance with the principles of TAAF’s Policy for Safeguarding of Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons.

6. PARTNERS

TAAF will advance the protection of Women and girls where possible, through its relationships with its partners, taking into account the particularities of the development context in which TAAF operates.

TAAF expects its partners to pursue their work in the same spirit and create a Caring Environment for Women and girls.

TAAF expects partners who work directly with Women and girls to develop an appropriate code of conduct that identifies the types of prohibited conduct that would cause abuse to Women and girls and which provides guidance for their staff to avoid any acts of abuse against Women and girls. In pursuing this goal.

TAAF therefore will:

- a. Implement in its template for agreements with partners, consultants and service providers, a clause, which aims to ensure the adherence of TAAF partners to this Policy for Safeguarding of Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons. The clause shall read as follows:

“TAAF believes that all Vulnerable/Marginalized persons, meaning pregnant women and girls, children below the age of eighteen years and Vulnerable/Marginalized adults, require protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Wishing to promote and ensure the highest standards in this regard, TAAF expects the Recipient [alternatively: the consultant/ the service provider/ the partner] to adhere to its Policy for Safeguarding of Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons and to promote the values and standards laid down in this Policy in its work.”

- b. Actively promote its Policy for Safeguarding of Women and girls by making the Policy publicly available through TAAF’s communication mediums and
- c. Provide relevant guidance to TAAF partners, aimed at the safeguarding of Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons.
- d. If any of the following incidents occur, a TAAF staff member must make a report to the Safeguarding Officer who must ensure that:
 - I. Abuse is observed or suspected.

- II. An allegation of abuse is made.
- III. A Women and girls discloses abuse.
- IV. A complaint is made about the possible abuse or exploitation of a Women and girls by a TAAF staff member or partner.

7. PROCEDURE

The role of the **Safeguarding Officer** is to:

- I. Receive and register reports of abuse of Women and girls s from TAAF staff.
- II. Collect additional information as appropriate.
- III. Assess risk.
- IV. Consult with TAAF's leadership, legal staff, and program staff as appropriate.
- V. When appropriate, consult with external organizations including partners, local agencies, and community leaders.
- VI. Make a formal referral if appropriate to the TAAF Senior Management (Operations) Committee, partners or local authorities.

8. REPORTING ABUSE

The Safeguarding Officer, after being informed of an allegation, will make a preliminary assessment and determine the course of action appropriate to the seriousness of the alleged offense. As a matter of principle, once it is decided that an alleged abuse needs to be investigated, then the Safeguarding Officer will disclose all relevant information to the Senior Management (Operations) Committee.

The following are key steps in any process to substantiate any reported allegations:

a. Investigate

The Safeguarding Officer will consult with the TAAF managers as appropriate; if the abuse occurred within the context of a project, the relevant program lead will be consulted.

The allegation will be investigated and the individual(s) concerned informed of the allegations against him or her, and the course of action to be taken. At the same time, the Safeguarding Officer will ensure that all information in the possession of the individual suspected is secured for investigation. If appropriate to safeguard TAAF

during the investigation period, the individual alleged to have committed the abuse may be taken out of his/her position. This may mean the individual is put into another position, put on leave with pay or suspended without pay.

b. Collect evidence

Depending on the magnitude and the complexity of the offense, investigations will be carried out by TAAF or where deemed appropriate, by local authorities. The involvement of external parties must be approved by the Safeguarding Officer.

c. Report

Ensuring a report is issued on a timely basis detailing the findings and conclusions of the investigation including recommendations for action to be taken. The report will only be disclosed to the Executive Director and Board, and others with a need to know. This is important to avoid damaging the reputation of those suspected of wrongdoing and subsequently found innocent.

9. ACTION

In all cases the course of action will be determined in consultation with the Executive Director and TAAF's legal staff.

10. PREVENTION

- a.** TAAF will follow preventative measures to make the workplace and TAAF projects and programs safe for Vulnerable/Marginalized people. Such measures will also protect staff and the reputation of the organization. , TAAF will also encourage its Partners adopt the highest possible standards in accordance with the scope of their operations and structure.
- b.** TAAF will ensure that all staff and partners working directly with Women and girls s and, in particular, with children, introduce a system of checks when recruiting new staff that considers the following if appropriate:
 - I. The same standards should be applied for paid, non-paid, short-term or permanent staff.
 - II. When a new job is being designed, the role and the issues of child and Vulnerable/Marginalized adult protection and risk in that job shall be carefully considered:
 - i. What contact with children or Vulnerable/Marginalized adults will the job involve?
 - ii. Will the employee have unsupervised access to children or

Vulnerable/Marginalized adults, or hold a position of trust? iii.
What other sort of contact may the person have with children or
Vulnerable/Marginalized adults (e.g. via email, telephone, letter,
Internet)?

- III. Making clear in job descriptions, terms of reference/role briefs for all posts (including where short-term contracts or consultants are being recruited) – whether the role includes any specific responsibility for working with Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons and for safeguarding.
 - IV. For all positions, the selection criteria will include the need to understand and abide by TAAF’s organizational policies and values.
 - V. Where relevant, the selection criteria shall outline the relevant experience needed and:
 - i. Application forms that ask for consent to gain information on a person’s past convictions/pending disciplinary proceedings shall be developed and documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications shall be requested, this is applicable for roles that involve safeguarding issues.
 - ii. The interview process shall be well planned and the interviewers have the relevant experience and knowledge about child and Vulnerable/Marginalized adult protection and best practice and how to question the candidate appropriately to elicit responses on this subject.
 - VI. Up to three employment-based references including the most recent employer shall be taken and the identity of referees shall be verified by ensuring that references are received on headed paper or company email addresses. Questions should be asked regarding conduct as well as job performance. Where the post-holder will have responsibility for working with children or Vulnerable/Marginalized adults, the reference request will include a particular question regarding the suitability of the candidate to work with this group.
 - VII. As many background checks as possible shall be conducted.
 - VIII. The use of probationary periods of employment to ensure suitability once in post shall be considered.
- c.** Staff and partners working directly with Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons and, in particular, with children, should assess the possible ways that children come into communication contact with staff, and to decide what procedures they need to follow

to prevent possible abuse through digital communication such as SMS text, email, internet chat rooms, photo phones, digital cameras etc.

- d.** TAAF and partners working directly or indirectly with Vulnerable/Marginalized Persons, and in particular with children, will foster and implement guidance for staff responsible for events/activities involving children in a development context.

Implementation and training

There is clear guidance to staff, local partners and other organizations (including 1 funding organizations) on how children will be kept safe.

Child protection must be applied in ways that are culturally sensitive but without 2 condoning acts that are harmful to children.

There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe. 3

All members of staff and volunteers in the organization and its local partners have training on child protection which includes an introduction to the organizations child protection policy and procedures where these exist.

All members of staff and local partners are provided with opportunities to learn 5 about how to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse.

Work has been undertaken with all local partners to agree good practice 6 expectations based on these standards.

Information and communication

Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.

Everyone in the organization and the local partners know which named staff member has special responsibilities for keeping children safe and how to contact them.

Contact details are readily available for local child protection resources, safe places, national authorities and emergency medical help.

Children are provided with information on where to go to for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying. 4

Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies as appropriate. 5

Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information. 6

Monitoring and review

Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection measures put in place by the organization. 1

Steps are taken to regularly ask children and parents/carers their views on policies and practices aimed at keeping children safe the effectiveness of these. 2

The organization uses the experience of operating child protection to influence policy and practice development. 3

All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored. 4

Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals, ideally at least every three years. 5

Children and parents/carers are consulted as part of these reviews of safeguarding policies and practices. 6
