

# **Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct**

The African Refugee Development Center (ARDC) makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. The purpose of this document is to set out ARDC's Safeguarding Policy to be used in conjunction with ARDC's Organizational Handbook.

ARDC comes into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the following activities: reception, personal case work, community outreach events, vocational trainings, educational trainings, tutoring, planned events, and with our online presence.

This policy seeks to ensure that ARDC undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of children and / or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

## **I. Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC)'s Safeguarding Policy to be used in conjunction with ARDC's Handbook.

This document is the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC) which will be followed by all members of the organisation; and followed and promoted by those in the position of leadership within the organisation.

1.2 Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring that their employees are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare and vulnerable adults.

1.3 The purpose of the organisation is to protect, assist and empower the African asylum seeker community residing in Israel through educational opportunities and skills trainings, dissemination of information on their rights within Israel,

1.4 We know that being a young person makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by the organisation are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people. .

1.5 Principles upon which the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy is based:

- The welfare of a child, young person and vulnerable adults will always be paramount
- The welfare of families will be promoted
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults and their families will be respected and listened to
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children, vulnerable adults and young people and follow the policy outlined below;

## **2. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

### **2.1 Defining children and vulnerable adults**

1. A child is any person under the age of 18.
2. Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations, some of which are based on traumatic experiences from their journey to Israel. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:
  - Is without any legal status or living illegally;
  - Has a learning or physical disability;
  - Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs;
  - Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity;
  - Is without access to healthcare or childcare;
  - Is living in sheltered or residential care home;
  - Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation

2.2 Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and vulnerable adults and families.

IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD OR CHILDREN AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS CONCERNED i.e.: If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 101) or taking a child to the nearest Hospital/clinic. If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 100) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via their powers to use Police Protection.

### **2.3 Recognition of Abuse or Neglect**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child and/or vulnerable adults. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child and/or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **2.3 Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

#### **2.4 Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children and vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children and vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of Emotional Abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child and/or vulnerable adult though it may occur alone.

## 2.5 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is illegal in Israel, and punishable by law with up to 2 years in prison. Sexual harassment is defined as the making of unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks. All forms of sexual harassment should be reported, and immediately dealt with.

## 2.6 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children and vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children and vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

2.7 Neglect Neglect is the failure to meet a child's and/or vulnerable adult basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's and/or vulnerable adult basic emotional needs.

2.8 Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children and vulnerable adults both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that organisation.

2.9 The organisation should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children and vulnerable adults and where there are concerns about a child's welfare. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

2.10 It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you MUST NOT discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances: where Sexual Abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected where organised or multiple abuse is suspected where there are concerns a child may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation where fabricated or induced illness (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by

proxy) is suspected where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk

2.11 These decisions should not be taken in isolation. Consult with your Project Manager, or the CEO of the organization.

### **3. Scope**

Staff includes:

- all staff, national and international
- all volunteers and interns

Associates include:

- all contractors, e.g., consultants
- all Board Members
- all partners including local community based partners
- Guests and Visitors

## **II. Prevention/Risk Assessment**

### **Reporting Concerns**

3.1 Because of your observations of, or information received you may become concerned about a child and/or vulnerable adult who has not spoken to you.

3.2 It is good practice to ask a child and/or vulnerable adult why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child and/or vulnerable adult wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

3.3 If you are concerned about a child and/or vulnerable adult you must share your concerns with the Project Manager.

3.4 If the Project Manager is one of those people is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with ARDC's CEO.

3.5 Consultation is not the same as making a referral, but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to an organization or institution outside of ARDC should progress.

### **4. Screening process**

4.1 Job advertisements will clearly state that ARDC upholds a Safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adults

4.2 Israeli law prohibits employer requests for criminal background checks, with few exceptions.

4.2a Men working directly with children can be asked for police clearance as per law

4.3 To ensure the safety of ARDC clients, ARDC will request references when hiring staff or volunteers.

4.4 References provided will be checked.

4.5 Photocopy of ID will be asked to accompany a signed Code of Conduct for volunteers, interns, and staff before beginning work at ARDC.

## **5. Allegations against Adults who work with Children and/or vulnerable adults.**

5.1 If you have information which suggests an adult who works with children and vulnerable adults (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child and/or vulnerable adult.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child and/or vulnerable adult.
- behaved towards a child/children and/or vulnerable adult/s in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

5.2 You should speak immediately with your Project manager who has responsibility for managing allegations. The senior manager will consult with the CEO.

5.3 If one of those people is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with the CEO.

## **6. E-Safety**

ARDC has a policy that covers the use of all ICT related activities including the use of social media, email and internet.

6.1 If you experience or are subject to any form of abuse via any form of ARDC's virtual presence, we take this matter very seriously and all incidences are required to be reported immediately.

6.2 Community members interested in participating in Advocacy campaigns, or any media based output should be briefed on the potential backlash. ARDC must obtain signed permission before publication of such materials.

### **6.3 Photos**

All photos taken at ARDC events will be kept secured and confidential.

6.4 Photos used for ARDC media, social media, or promotional materials will be used with the permission of those photographed. Permission will be granted with oral consent.

## **7. Confidentiality**

7.1 The organization should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

7.2 Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to the need for protection.

7.3 Relevant information, when shared, will be noted and stored for easy recognition of harmful patterns.

7.4 Information taken from ARDC beneficiaries is sensitive in nature. All information is stored in a secure, online application.

If in doubt, consult:

## **8. Staff Training**

8.1 As the situation for African refugees and asylum seekers in Israel is frequently changing, staff trainings will be held twice yearly to keep staff and volunteers abreast of the changes, and how they might negatively impact children and/or vulnerable adults.

8.2 Training manuals will kept in ARDC's files, and updated to fit the current context.

8.3 Volunteers and interns will be trained on Safeguarding during their initiation.

Signed, 