**MEMORANDUM**

To: Nick Allardice, CEO  
From: Sarah Kayongo, VP of Programs  
Date: March 21, 2025  
Subject: Immediate Actions & Long-Term Safeguarding Reforms – DRC Incident Follow-up

1. **Goals:**

* Prioritize safeguarding and protection of potential victims.
* Maintain organizational integrity and transparency.
* Prevent escalation of risks and maintain stakeholder trust.
* Ensure accountability and continuous learning.

1. **Process and Steps:**

**Step 1: Immediate Acknowledgement and Transparent Internal Communication**

* Convene an urgent crisis management meeting involving key leadership:
  + Global Safeguarding Team
  + Country Director for DRC
  + Legal Counsel
  + HR and Security Teams
  + Communications Lead
* Clearly state the allegations internally and document all known facts.
* Communicate to senior stakeholders that an investigation is underway.

**Step 2: Assemble a Crisis Response Taskforce**

* Team composition:
  + Safeguarding Team Lead (oversight)
  + Legal Counsel (adherence to laws)
  + Regional Director (local leadership)
  + Independent Investigator (external party, if feasible)
  + Communications Officer (managing stakeholder narratives)
* Division of responsibilities:
  + Safeguarding team: Define the scope of investigation.
  + Legal: Ensure compliance with DRC laws and international safeguarding protocols.
  + Regional Director: Liaise with local authorities and community leaders.
  + Communications: Prepare holding statements and updates.

**Step 3: Remote Investigation Strategy**

* Since physical presence is limited by conflict, deploy remote investigation methods:
  + Set up anonymous reporting hotlines and encrypted messaging lines for whistleblowers.
  + Engage local NGOs or trusted partners to gather verified field data.
  + Use satellite-based monitoring and community contact verification.
* Contract an independent safeguarding consultancy with DRC field knowledge.

**Step 4: External Stakeholder Communication**

* Prepare a transparent but cautious communication strategy for:
  + Donors (e.g., USAID, foundations)
  + Local government officials
  + Community leaders and local civil society organizations
* Use apology and corrective action language over denial.
* Commit publicly to a timeline for investigation updates.

**Step 5: Risk Mitigation Actions**

* Freeze new enrollments in the DRC program pending outcome of the investigation.
* Re-screen all enrolled recipients for validity and safeguarding concerns.
* Temporarily redeploy senior safeguarding and security personnel to regional offices bordering DRC for oversight.

**Step 6: Long-Term Governance Strengthening**

* Following findings, update safeguarding protocols and integrate an automated red-flag detection system into enrollment workflows.
* Strengthen community-based verification and establish permanent whistleblower partnerships with trusted local actors.
* Develop safeguarding scenario training simulations for field staff.

**Summary of Team and Responsibilities**:

Team Member: Safeguarding Lead Responsibility: Oversee investigation framework, coordination, and escalation process.

Team Member: Regional Director (DRC) Responsibility: Liaison with local government and community stakeholders.

Team Member: Legal Counsel Responsibility: Ensure compliance with safeguarding law and documentation integrity.

Team Member: External Investigator Responsibility: Conduct independent fact-finding and victim interviews.

Team Member: Communications Officer Responsibility: Manage internal and external messaging and donor updates.

Team Member: HR Team Responsibility: Support victim care, referral services, and future hiring screening.

Team Member: Data and Tech Team Responsibility: Monitor digital reporting channels and fraud detection tools.

Conclusion of my actions:

* Act swiftly, transparently, and with victim protection at the core.
* Avoid denial; instead, show ownership and corrective intent.
* Use multi-channel communication and adapt crisis management techniques for on-the-ground realities.
* Embed lessons learned into GiveDirectly’s safeguarding and governance framework for future resilience.

**References:**

* GiveDirectly DRC Case Report (2023). https://www.givedirectly.org/drc-case-2023/
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* Greenberg, J., & Elliott, C. (2009). A cold cut crisis: Listeriosis, Maple Leaf Foods, and the politics of apology. Canadian Journal of Communication, 34, 189–204.

Thank you,

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GiveDirectly