

# **SPECTRA SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?**

Safeguarding is the responsibility of organizations to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do no harm to children, nor expose them to abuse or exploitation, and to ensure the organization's staff, board members, and associated professionals are not subject to harassment or violence.

The policy lays out the commitments made by Spectra and informs staff, board members, and associated personnel of their responsibilities to safeguard against harassment, violence, and exploitation. This policy does not cover safeguarding concerns in the wider community not involving Spectra staff or associated personnel; nor does it cover activities impacting Spectra staff and associated personnel during their personal time.

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting all people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from encountering our staff or programs. Safeguarding means protecting individuals' health, wellbeing, and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

## **WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY?**

This policy impacts:

- Spectra staff
- Spectra board members; and,
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to Spectra, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; program visitors including journalists, celebrities, and politicians.

# **DEFINITIONS OF FORMS OF ABUSE WHICH THIS POLICY COVERS**

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult.

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Persistent emotional harm that causes a severe and long-lasting impact such as trauma. It may involve saying to a person that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. It may involve seeing or hearing the abuse of another, including domestic abuse, and may mean the person is frequently frightened. It can occur as the result of a one-off event but is usually the result of frequent and persistence behavior. Serious emotional abuse can lead to significant impairment of a person's social, emotional, cognitive, intellectual development and/or disturbance of their behavior. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or persuading a person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence. The person may not be aware of what is happening. It covers a continuum from: non-contact forms of harm include genital exposure, having a person pose or perform in a sexual manner or exposing them to sexually explicit material or acts (including pornographic material), grooming of a person (and possibly those around them) in preparation for abuse, communication of graphic sexual matters (including by email and SMS); to a range of contact behaviors, such as kissing, touching or fondling the person in a sexual manner, penetration of the vagina or anus either by digital, penile or any other object, or coercing the person to perform any such act on themselves or anyone else. It is important to note that sexual abuse is committed by people of all genders.

## **USE OF THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT TO ABUSE**

As working practice and engagement with community members at Spectra is frequently undertaken online it is important to highlight online abuse as any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It

can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets, and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming, live-streaming sites.

## WHO DOES THIS SAFEGUARDING POLICY APPLY TO?

This policy applies to children or adults, staff, and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their encountering Spectra. This includes harm arising from **the conduct of staff or personnel associated with Spectra.**

The policy lays out the commitments made by Spectra and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Everyone connected to Spectra should know how to keep people safe during its operations, including children, staff, board members, and other associated professionals. Spectra will provide learning opportunities and consistently maintain necessary measures to ensure all staff, board members, and associated professionals understand their rights and that the design and implementation of Spectra's programmes and activities responsibilities under this safeguarding policy are in accordance with it.

In addition, the membership of Spectra shall understand Spectra's commitments to safeguarding and what to do if concerns arise.

### **This policy does not cover:**

Members, and beneficiaries of Spectra's work, from any harm that may be caused when they do not encounter Spectra. This includes harm arising from:

- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Spectra or associated personnel
- Actions at official Spectra events; and,
- The design and implementation of Spectra's programs and activities.

## **MONITORING SAFEGUARDING**

Monitoring safeguarding: the Safeguarding Officer and Executive director are responsible for assessing implementation of this policy annually and the policy will be subject to thorough review every three (3) years.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

All staff, advisors, board members will be provided with mandatory training in safeguarding within the first 3 months of their association, with refresher training every 2 years, with the training provided preferably in-house. For this purpose, Spectra commits to build staff 's capacity in safeguarding, so that those providing training have a good understanding of the Spectra community, principles, and values. All staff, advisors and board members will have access to a copy of this policy.

## **STAFF RECRUITMENT**

Recruitment procedures for staff, contractors, advisors, and board members who will have direct or indirect contact with community members, especially children will include checks on suitability for working with them. These will take the form of references from three independent referees, which are verified by telephone or a virtual conversation. Referees cannot be Spectra's staff or family members and must have known the candidate for longer than 3 years. Safeguarding will form part of the induction/orientation program for staff, and relevant consultants, advisors, and board members.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Spectra's approach to risk is not about complete risk avoidance. However, supportive management and regular reflective supervision for Spectra staff, advisors and board members is vital – providing opportunities to reconsider plans and respond to changing or emerging needs. Risk assessments will be conducted prior to any activities or initiatives, especially the ones involving children, to anticipate possible challenges and ways of responding to identified risks and will result in the development of a risk register (a 'living' document that helps project teams to manage risks). Where high risks are identified, activities will not proceed until a mitigation strategy is developed that reduces the risk to a medium or low level. Risk assessment should, however, be an ongoing process, and one which community members themselves are involved in. Risk registers should be updated regularly (every 3-6 months depending on the length of the initiative).

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

Spectra believes that everyone we encounter, regardless of age, gender identity, gender expression, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, class, or any other characteristics, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Spectra will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by or impacting staff or associated personnel.

Spectra commits to safeguarding against harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

## 1. PREVENTION

As an organization, Spectra will:

- Ensure all staff and board members have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy;
- Design and undertake all its programs and activities in a way that protects people from risk of harm. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programs is gathered and communicated;
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff, board members, and associated personnel;
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization; and,
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Spectra staff, board members, and associated personnel **must not**:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18;
- Sexually abuse or exploit children or other adults;
- Subject a child or other adults to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect;
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labor or trafficking;

- Abuse their power, position, or influence for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships or harassment that exploits unequal power dynamics within the organization and its bodies.

Additionally, Spectra staff, board members, and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents violations under this safeguarding policy and promotes the implementation of the policy; and,
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a Spectra staff member, board member, or associated personnel to the appropriate board or staff member as outlined below.

## 2. REPORTING

Spectra will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, board members, and the communities with whom we work. Any staff or board member reporting concerns or complaints will be protected by Spectra's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy. Spectra will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, and official bodies.

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Executive Director and Safeguarding Officer. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to the Executive Director because that person is implicated in the concern, they may report to the Board member. If for any reason the staff member cannot report to the Executive Director or Board, the complainant may report the concern to the Safeguarding Officer appointed by the board on an annual basis.

Any beneficiary or board member of Spectra who has a complaint or concern related to safeguarding may report it to the Executive Director, Board members or Safeguarding Officer.

All reports of the account of abuse must be recorded, any concerns or observations, any agreements or discussions with the person reporting the abuse and the actions the Safeguarding Officer, Executive director and other people have or have not taken.

### **3. RESPONSE**

Spectra's Executive Director and Safeguarding Officer will promptly investigate and follow up on any safeguarding reports as required by legal and statutory obligations and will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff, board members, or other associated personnel found in breach of policy. Disciplinary measures may range from a verbal warning to termination of staff (or removal from office for board members), depending on the act committed.

Spectra will offer support to survivors of harm allegedly caused by staff, board members, or associated personnel based on expressed needs of the survivor.

Where allegations remain unsubstantiated: In some circumstances the capacity may not exist to undertake a fair and proper investigation of allegations against an employee or an associate of Spectra. In these circumstances, or where an allegation is not substantiated by evidence, Spectra will consider if further action is necessary to ensure the safety and protection of persons involved, especially children, including offering the person or child with healing justice support by a trained wellbeing practitioner.

#### **Organizational Responsibility**

The responsibility for decisions and actions rests with Spectra as an organization and not with any individual. Staff and any other representatives of Spectra must not act in isolation but must consult with Spectra's Safeguarding Officer and Executive director before taking any action in response to person's protection, especially child protection concerns.

#### **Internal Safeguarding Procedures**

Once a report has been made to the Safeguarding Officer they must immediately (within 24 hours) organize a joint call with Program Officer and Executive Director to determine the most appropriate response to the safeguarding issue.

Any response should be determined by:

- the views and feedback of the person, especially child at the center of the concern and;
  - the local context which may include advice from local organizations/individuals (who know the local environment or who can provide support such as legal advice or therapeutic counselling).
- Any response should include regular discussions of the risks and the support necessary for the person, especially the child at the center of the concern. Where possible, the child at the center of the concern should be involved in these discussions.

## Reporting to the local authorities or police

If it is determined that a crime against the safety of a person, especially the child has been committed, it is particularly important that a risk assessment of the implications of reporting the crime to national/local authorities or police is carried out (with advice from local organizations/individuals).

In countries where there is doubt about the integrity and/or competence of statutory authorities, and/or where reporting may lead to reprisal or revictimization for the child or their family, all potential risks should be assessed before any actions are taken. Any decision must consider the legal obligations, as failure to report may, in some countries, constitute a legal offence. Any decision not to report cases to the relevant local authorities must be documented and authorized by the Executive Director and the Safeguarding Officer.

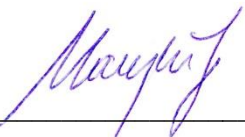
## 4. CONFIDENTIALITY

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be kept secure at all times.

Marija Jovanović

President of the General Assembly

25<sup>th</sup> December 2020, in Podgorica



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