

# Humanitarian Response & Development Foundation (HRDF)

## SEAH Policy

### *Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment Prevention and Response*

#### **1. Message from HRDF**

At HRDF, we believe that every person has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued. The communities we work with trust us with their stories, their children, and their hopes for a better life. Protecting that trust is not just a requirement, it is our duty.

This policy is our promise that we will never ignore, excuse, or tolerate any behavior that harms or disrespects the people we serve. It also shows our donors and partners that HRDF is committed to a culture of dignity, accountability, and protection.

We do not simply aim to prevent exploitation and abuse. We aim to build an environment where people feel safe to speak, safe to work, and safe to seek help when needed.

#### **2. What This Policy Is For**

This policy explains:

- How HRDF prevents sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH)
- The expectations we have from everyone linked with our work
- What steps we take when concerns arise
- How survivors are treated with care, respect, and confidentiality

This is not just a document for compliance. It reflects our values, our faith, our culture, and our belief in the dignity of every human being.

#### **3. Who Must Follow This Policy**

This applies to everyone working with or representing HRDF, including:

- HRDF staff
- Consultants and volunteers
- Board members
- Field workers, teachers, and mobilizers
- Partner NGOs, vendors, or contractors
- Any person acting on behalf of HRDF

Everyone is responsible for protecting the people we serve.

## **4. What We Stand For**

HRDF has **zero tolerance** for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Any behavior that humiliates, manipulates, or harms others
- Retaliation against anyone who reports a concern

This applies everywhere: in the office, in the field, during travel, and online.

## **5. Understanding the Terms (Easy and Clear)**

### **Sexual Exploitation**

Using someone's vulnerability or need in exchange for sexual benefit. For example, offering aid, jobs, or services in return for sexual acts.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Any sexual activity without consent. It includes touching, threats, coercion, force, and any sexual activity with a child (anyone under 18), whether consent is given or not.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Unwanted sexual comments, jokes, messages, gestures, or behavior that creates discomfort, fear, or humiliation.

In Islam, Pakistani law, and international standards, such acts are strictly prohibited. HRDF respects both legal and cultural safeguards for human dignity.

## **6. Our Cultural and Religious Perspective**

We recognize that modesty, dignity, and respect are deeply rooted in our culture and faith. Protecting vulnerable people is not only a legal or professional requirement, it is a moral and religious responsibility. HRDF promotes an environment where men, women, youth, and children feel safe, and where honor, respect, and privacy are upheld.

## **7. What Is Not Allowed at HRDF**

The following are strictly forbidden:

- Any sexual activity with children
- Demanding or exchanging sexual favors for aid, jobs, or assistance
- Sexual relationships with beneficiaries even when "consensual"
- Sharing inappropriate messages, jokes, or pictures
- Invading privacy or making unwanted comments
- Misusing HRDF resources for exploitative behavior
- Threatening or punishing someone for reporting

Any violation will lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal and legal reporting.

## 8. Prevention and Safeguards

HRDF reduces risks by:

- Careful recruitment and reference checks
- Mandatory orientation on safeguarding and ethics
- Regular staff awareness sessions
- Safe access to project sites for women, children, and persons with disabilities
- Ensuring female staff are present during field interactions with women and girls
- Making reporting options private, culturally acceptable, and accessible

We look at power dynamics in communities and work to prevent misuse at every level.

## 9. Reporting Concerns

Anyone can report a concern, including staff, community members, or visitors.

### Reporting Channels include:

- Safeguarding Focal Person in the field

Confidential email ([aap@hrdf.org.pk](mailto:aap@hrdf.org.pk))

- Complaint boxes or written feedback
- Verbal reporting through trusted staff
- Anonymous reporting

Reports are handled **confidentially and without judgment**. No one will be punished for reporting in good faith.

## 10. Investigation Process

Once a complaint is received, HRDF will:

1. Ensure immediate safety
2. Document the concern securely
3. Conduct a fair and confidential investigation
4. Take action based on evidence
5. Inform donors where required
6. Refer criminal acts to authorities when necessary

All investigations will be guided by respect, confidentiality, and justice.

## 11. Support for Survivors

Survivors will be treated with dignity and compassion. Support may include:

- Emotional and psychosocial support

- Medical care
- Legal guidance
- Protection from retaliation
- Referrals to specialized services

The survivor will always decide what happens next. Nothing is forced.

## **12. Working with Partners and Consultants**

Anyone implementing work on HRDF's behalf must:

- Accept and follow this policy
- Inform HRDF immediately of any SEAH concerns
- Allow HRDF to take action if safeguarding risks are identified

We do not work with partners who do not take safeguarding seriously.

## **13. Accountability**

All HRDF staff, regardless of rank, are accountable to this policy. The Board and senior leadership ensure:

- Safeguarding is integrated across all programs
- All staff know their responsibilities
- HRDF continuously improves its systems

No one is above the policy.

## **14. Confidentiality**

All complaints are handled discreetly. Information is only shared on a need-to-know basis. HRDF never discloses a survivor's identity without permission.

## **15. Policy Review**

HRDF will review this policy at least once a year to ensure it reflects new learning, donor requirements, and the organization's growth.

## **16. Closing Statement**

This policy is a reflection of who we are and the values we live by. At HRDF, protection is not just compliance. It is a moral commitment, a cultural responsibility, and a demonstration of our faith and humanity.

We exist to serve. We exist to protect. We exist to uphold dignity.

**If we cannot keep people safe, we do not deserve their trust**