

HRDF Whistleblowing Policy

Humanitarian Response & Development Foundation (HRDF)
Because silence protects the abuser, not the truth.

1. Introduction

At HRDF, we believe that accountability is not just an organizational requirement. It is a moral and cultural responsibility. We owe it to the people we serve, to our team, and to our faith to speak up when something is wrong.

This Whistleblowing Policy is our commitment to creating an environment where anyone can raise concerns safely and confidently, without fear of punishment. It is written to protect those who speak up in good faith, whether they are staff, volunteers, partners, community members, or beneficiaries.

We want to make this clear from the beginning:

HRDF will not tolerate silence around wrongdoing, and we will not allow retaliation against those who report it.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing means sharing information about wrongdoing, misconduct, or unethical behavior that harms the organization or the people it serves.

This may include:

- Fraud or corruption
- Sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment
- Misuse of donor funds or aid items
- Nepotism, favoritism, or abuse of power
- Harassment or discrimination
- Violations of safeguarding policies
- Serious safety risks or negligence
- Any action that breaks HRDF policies, donor rules, or Pakistan's laws

Whistleblowing is not complaining or personal disagreement. It is about protecting the integrity of the organization and the rights of people affected by wrongdoing.

3. Why This Policy Matters in Our Context

We understand that in our culture, speaking against someone in authority can feel uncomfortable, especially in environments where hierarchy or social pressure is strong. People often stay silent to “keep peace,” avoid conflict, or because they fear consequences.

But at HRDF, **staying silent allows harm to continue**. True respect and loyalty mean protecting the organization from wrongdoing, not covering it up.

This policy is written to give people a **safe, dignified, confidential way to speak up** that respects both cultural sensitivities and international standards.

4. Who Can Report?

Anyone connected to HRDF can raise a concern, including:

- Staff at any level
- Volunteers, interns, consultants
- Board members
- Partners and contractors
- Program participants and beneficiaries
- Community members
- Vendors or external stakeholders

If you see something wrong, you have the right and responsibility to report it.

5. HRDF’s Commitment to Whistleblowers

HRDF guarantees the following:

- Protection from retaliation, discrimination, or punishment
- Confidentiality to the maximum possible extent
- Fair and timely investigation
- Respect for cultural and personal dignity
- No requirement to provide written evidence immediately
- Anonymous reporting options if needed

Your safety matters more to us than your position or identity.

6. What Can Be Reported?

You can report:

- Policy violations
 - Misconduct by staff or leadership
 - Financial fraud, bribery, or theft
 - Safeguarding concerns involving children or adults
 - Violations of SEAH or Code of Conduct
 - Deliberate misuse of HRDF resources
 - Actions that harm the organization's credibility
 - Any issue that could seriously damage HRDF or the people we serve
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7. How to Report a Concern

You may use any of the following confidential channels:

1. Safeguarding or Whistleblowing Focal Person

Designated staff member

2. Email (Confidential)

whistleblowing@hrdf.org.pk (can be created as needed)

3. Complaint Boxes

Available at field locations

4. Verbal Reporting

Directly to trusted senior staff, especially for people with literacy or language barriers

5. Anonymous Submission

We will still investigate as far as possible.

Reporting in Urdu, Sindhi, or any local language is accepted.

8. What Happens After You Report

Once a concern is raised, HRDF will:

1. Acknowledge the report privately
2. Assess immediate risks to individuals
3. Conduct a fair investigation led by authorized personnel
4. Keep the process confidential
5. Take action based on evidence
6. Inform donors or authorities if required
7. Provide feedback to the whistleblower where appropriate

No report is ignored, even if it comes anonymously.

9. Protection Against Retaliation

Retaliation is when someone punishes or harms a whistleblower for speaking up. HRDF sees this as a serious violation.

Examples of retaliation include:

- Threats or intimidation
- Isolation or humiliation
- Loss of privileges or opportunities
- Termination or demotion
- Social pressure or character attacks

Any retaliation will result in disciplinary action.

10. False Allegations

Deliberately making false accusations is not acceptable and may lead to disciplinary action. However, if someone reports a concern in good faith and it turns out to be untrue, they are still protected.

11. Confidentiality

All information relating to whistleblowing reports will be handled discreetly. Names and identities will not be shared outside the investigation team, except when required by law or safety concerns.

12. What HRDF Expects from Staff

Every HRDF representative must:

- Speak up if they witness wrongdoing
- Encourage others to raise concerns safely
- Never intimidate or silence a whistleblower
- Respect confidentiality at all times
- Support a culture of honesty and transparency

13. Donor and Public Transparency

HRDF is committed to being a transparent, ethical, and accountable organization. Donors and partners will be informed of cases where serious violations occur, in line with reporting agreements.

This policy will also be shared publicly on HRDF platforms because we want communities to know they are protected too.

14. Policy Review

HRDF will review this policy annually to ensure it stays relevant to legal standards, donor expectations, local realities, and organizational learning.

15. Closing Statement

At HRDF, whistleblowing is not betrayal. It is an act of responsibility, courage, and service to others.

We want people to feel safe not just because of our projects, but because of our principles. When you speak up, you protect our mission, our values, and the communities depending on us.

Good people stay silent only when systems fail them. This policy exists to ensure no one needs to stay silent again.