

## TASI Safeguarding Policy



**Safeguarding**



## *Introduction*

Safeguarding is the responsibility that any Organisation has to ensure that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations and programmes do no harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults (together referred to as 'vulnerable people' under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the company has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that the company has for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.

Child protection is a central part of but not separate from safeguarding. It is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of significant harm because of abuse or programme of work. It also includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse. Over recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the way in which children, young people and vulnerable adults can be at risk of discrimination, neglect, abuse and exploitation by those who are in positions of trust and power over them, including through international development activities.

Consequently, there has been a significant increase in the efforts made by development organization to ensure that no harm results from the contact their employees, volunteers and other representatives have with their target populations or communities.

Through their work, TASI employees, employees of partner organization and volunteers may engage with young people and vulnerable adults either directly or indirectly. TASI recognises it has an obligation to put in place all reasonable safeguarding measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and protection of children, young people, women and vulnerable adults, including those with whom we work and those in the communities where TASI work is undertaken.

## **Definitions**

**Abuse** - a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts.

**Discriminatory abuse** – abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.

**Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It



may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.

**Physical abuse** – includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

**Psychological abuse** - includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include not giving a vulnerable person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

**Sexual abuse** - involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.

## Child

- According to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, a child is any person under the age of 18. This definition is widely recognized and adopted in international law, which considers individuals under 18 as children, irrespective of the legal age of majority in their country or home country.
- The **UN CRC** emphasizes that children are often more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to their developmental stage, dependency on others, and other factors like age, gender, and socio-economic status.

## 2. Vulnerable Person/People

- This is an umbrella term, used in the context of safeguarding, to cover children, young people, and vulnerable adults. In UN terminology, "vulnerable people" refers to those individuals who may face increased risks of harm, abuse, or exploitation due to various factors such as age, disability, illness, socio-economic status, or gender.
- The **UN** emphasizes that individuals who are considered vulnerable require special protection, rights, and considerations to ensure their safety and well-being.

## 3. Vulnerable Adult



- A **vulnerable adult** is defined by the United Nations as an individual 18 years or older who, due to reasons such as **disability, age, gender, social and economic status, or illness**, may not be able to protect themselves from harm, abuse, or exploitation.
- The **UN** focuses on protecting adults who, due to their vulnerability, may be unable to independently safeguard their well-being, and may need extra consideration and support, especially in contexts of abuse or exploitation

#### 4. Youth or Young People

- The term **youth or young people** typically refers to individuals aged between **15 to 35**. The **UN** has a separate framework for young people because they fall into a transitional age group between childhood and adulthood, with distinct social, educational, and developmental needs.
- **UN Framework:** Young people are often seen as in need of special consideration for safeguarding, as they may still face vulnerabilities related to their age, gender, or socio-economic status, despite being technically adults. This is because they may be in the process of transitioning to full adulthood and may face challenges that older adults do not.

#### Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers/interns, consultants/resource persons, implementing partners, contractors, suppliers and any other individuals working for or representing TASI. They are obligated to comply with the terms of this policy as mentioned in their contractual agreement and shall ensure that their employees and subcontractors do likewise throughout the duration of their contract of work/employment with TASI.

- This policy expected standards of practice and behavior of TASI staff, partners and interns. It has been designed to give all who work with TASI the confidence to carry out their roles and to promote positive environments free from harm and abuse, and conducive with health, wellbeing and development.

#### **This conduct policy should be read and understood with the TASI Code of Conduct and Code of ethics**

I agree to abide by the values, principles and protocols laid down in the policy, including the 6 prohibited behaviors. These are;

- I. Sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18**
- II. Sexually abuse or exploit children, young adolescents or vulnerable adults**
- III. Physically assault a child, young people or vulnerable adult**
- IV. Put a child, young people or vulnerable adult at risk of harm**
- V. Sexual activity with a community member**
- VI. Use position of power to take unfair advantage of fellow employees, partners, community members.**



S/N	Principle/ Values	(√)
1.	I understand my safeguarding responsibilities as related to my position within, or affiliation with TASI	
2.	I understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and that the onus is on me as an individual engaged or associated with TASI to not behave in a way that could generate harm, or in a way that could cause or be constructed as abuse.	
3	I take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable and transparent, and that I do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.	
4	I am familiar with the internal reporting process, and know to report a safeguarding incident, allegation, suspicion or disclosure	
5	I agree to report any concern or suspicions regarding abuse or policy non compliance by a TASI employee inline with TASI reporting procedures.	
6	I understand sexual activity with children (persons under 18yrs) is strictly prohibited regardless of the age of majority, or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.	
7	I commit to at all times treating young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.	
8	I understand that a breach of the policy could result in disciplinary measures, legal steps or criminal investigation.	
9	I commit to the promotion and maintenance of an environment that prevents all forms of exploitation and abuse, and which allows for the healthy development and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults.	

By signing below I hereby commit to abide by and uphold the values, behaviors and requirements outlined above.

**NAME:**

**POSITION:**



**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**