

# Safeguarding Policy of **YUVA**

# 1.Introduction

YUVA (Youths Union For Voluntary Action ). Hazaribag is a professionally managed development organization working in several districts in the State of Jharkhand in the areas of Child Protection, Women Empowerment, Gender, Education, Health and Livelihood. It is also an Identified Resource Agency for Govt. Organizations and Grass roots level organizations.

Our programmes include health, education and social inclusion interventions in all over in jharkhand. Many of those benefitting are adults at risk<sup>1</sup>, children and young people. We do not implement projects primarily on our own but work with a range of partners including government, civil society actors and the private sector. It is primarily our partners who work directly with adults at risk and children.

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means promoting and protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, exploitation and abuse. A safeguarding approach means identifying and minimising the risk of harm to children and adults from staff, representatives and partners; our operations and programme activities including and includes responding appropriately to any safeguarding concerns about children and adults within communities where we work. It entails a wide potential range of policies, procedures and activities seeking to address child and adult safety and wellbeing.

In YUVA' case, a safeguarding approach means minimising the risk of harm, exploitation or abuse of children and adults from staff, operations and programme activities. It includes reporting any safeguarding concerns about a child or adult within communities where we work to the appropriate authorities. This policy focuses on addressing those risks by developing standards and mitigating measures to target and reduce residual risk.

Following the widespread and serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers in West Africa at the turn of the millennium, the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was issued in 2003. It has been applied by all major humanitarian agencies and integrated into their policies and procedures.

Subsequently the "do no harm" principle is now widely recognised as an important element in the wider strengthening of safeguarding systems at both national and local level when providing health, education and social protection services.

It is known that children and adults with disabilities are at particular risk of harm, exploitation and abuse. This policy recognises that these specific risks are best addressed through a broader (twin-track) safeguarding approach with specific actions focused on children and adults with disabilities where relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> An adult at risk (Care Act 2014) is someone aged 18 or over who has care and support needs due to their age or frailty, gender, mental or physical health problems, learning or physical disabilities or the impact of disasters and conflicts, who is as a result unable to protect themselves from harm, exploitation or abuse.

## 2. Target groups of the policy

The Safeguarding Policy is to be applied across all organisational activities and in all of YUVA' programme themes, including health, education, social inclusion and research. All YUVA' representatives and partner organisations<sup>2</sup> should be aware of and adhere to the policy. YUVA' representatives are defined as trustees, employees (permanent or temporary), consultants, volunteers who work directly for YUVA and donors travelling on YUVA business.

In addition to complying with the policy all representatives must sign and will be held accountable to YUVA' Safeguarding Code of Conduct<sup>3</sup>.

First and foremost, it is expected that partners will have policies and procedures in place covering safeguarding in order for YUVA to enter into partnership. This will not always be the case as the start of a partnership, particularly with grassroots civil society partners. Where partners do not have appropriate policies, but it is deemed essential that YUVA work with them, policies will be developed as part of the early stages of the partnership, led by the due diligence process.

It is recognised that, for government partners in particular, national policy and legal frameworks take precedence. However, where the national legal framework is considered weaker than YUVA policy, it may be a specific national advocacy activity to strengthen that framework, particularly with regards to provision for children and adults with disabilities.

YUVA is unable to enforce the policy with independent, external agencies, such as partner organisations. However we can choose not to work with partners, put specific conditions into partnership agreements, or end partnerships based on partners' policies and their implementation of these, including safeguarding.

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<sup>2</sup>Partner organisations here are defined as those included within YUVA' Partnership Policy

<sup>3</sup>See YUVA Code of Conduct for Representatives, included as Annex 3

### **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that YUVA activities are implemented in a safe and protective environment where harm, exploitation and abuse are effectively prevented as far as reasonably possible, and responded to effectively.

The policy has three specific objectives:

- 1) Keeping children and adults safe
- 2) Safeguarding the reputation of YUVA, including guarding YUVA' representatives from false allegations or from operating within an unclear framework
- 3) Ensuring the highest standards of behaviour from representatives and minimising the risk of abusers entering the organisation.

### **Children and adults with disabilities**

YUVA has a specific mandate to protect and promote the rights of people with visual impairment, and is increasingly involved in direct support to other people with disabilities. Recent research on child protection and disability<sup>4</sup> has found that children with disabilities experience far higher levels of abuse than their peers. Girls and boys with different impairments are vulnerable to many forms of abuse but most at risk are children with intellectual impairment and communication difficulties. Emotional and sexual abuse are mostly reported by girls with disabilities, but boys with disabilities are also targeted.

Negative cultural norms around disability contribute to putting people with disabilities at risk of violence and abuse, including factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, difficulty in protecting oneself or inadequately understanding and/or communicating that abuse has occurred. People with visual impairments are especially vulnerable as they are dependent on tactile guidance. They are also likely to be particularly vulnerable in care situations, where they require assistance with toileting, dressing, bathing etc.

YUVA will work with its programme partners to make sure that the particular risks of harm, exploitation or abuse facing people with disabilities will be properly assessed, addressed and monitored within the local context where YUVA' partners operate.

YUVA commits to communicating this policy throughout the organisation, to partners and, where relevant, to children themselves, their parents and other beneficiaries in programme activities; as part of a broader programme to challenge stereotypes and cultural norms around disability, particularly with regards to children's potential and rights.

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<sup>4</sup>Plan International 2016 "Protect Us"- inclusion of children with disabilities in child protection

## 4. Standards

Standard and aim	Specific areas of activity / indicators	Owner
<b><u>Awareness and communication:</u></b> All YUVA representatives are aware of the policy and the organisation communicates its approach to key stakeholders	1.1 All YUVA representatives are responsible for complying with the policy and code of conduct, including following all reporting and response procedures outlined. 1.2 YUVA representatives <sup>5</sup> will be introduced to the policy and sign the code of conduct as part of their induction, contracting or ongoing management process. 1.3 All partner organisations must receive a copy of the policy and code of conduct as part of the development of any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Project Funding Agreement process (PFA). 1.4 YUVA will communicate the policy through its website and directly to core stakeholders <sup>6</sup> , to demonstrate its commitment and the importance of the policy 1.5 In particular, YUVA will communicate about and where available share research of safeguarding issues specifically in relation to those with disabilities	
<b><u>Working in partnership to safeguard children and adults:</u></b> All YUVA partners will have policies and procedures in place covering safeguarding	2.1 YUVA will only enter into an MoU or PFA with organisations that either have these in place, or are committed to developing them, based on YUVA' policy, as an integral part of the partnership and where specifically mentioned within the PFA. This will be assessed during the due diligence process. 2.2 Where a partner's policies and procedures are less strong than YUVA, and where they do not address issues of those with disabilities specifically, consideration will be paid to advocating for and providing technical support to strengthening of the policy. 2.3 Assessment of risks to children and adults are included as a specific part of the project development or inception phase of every project, using the approved toolkit.	
Standard and aim	Specific areas of activity / indicators	Owner

<sup>5</sup>YUVA' employees, permanent and temporary, consultants and volunteers employed by YUVA

<sup>6</sup>To include, but not limited to: DFID, Irish Aid, European Commission, World Bank, Gates Foundation, USAID, WHO, select INGO partners (Fred Hollows Foundation, International Disability Alliance, ADD International etc), Comic Relief, Big Lottery Fund, selected major donors, Merck, Pfizer, Unilever, Standard Chartered Bank.

<p><u>Putting the policy into context:</u> All YUVA countries apply and implement the policy</p>	<p>3.1 Each office location has a Safeguarding Focal Person (SFP) in place with clear responsibilities for coordinating the implementation of the policy as well as mapping the local / external context (including legislation) for safeguarding.</p> <p>3.2 Each country has in place a safeguarding reference group which develops and reviews annually the country safeguarding plan based on this policy, outlines the members of the reference group, contact details for the SFP, any specific contextual adaptations to the policy (agreed with the Safeguarding Manager) and any advocacy, training and awareness plans.</p> <p>3.3 The plan will specifically include a communications plan including how it will be rolled out with partners, children, parents, communities.</p> <p>3.4 Each SFP will work with the Safeguarding Manager (SM) and reference group to assess any contextual issues with the policy and develop country specific procedures if relevant. These will include guidance for YUVA representatives about appropriate official reporting procedures in the case of an incident.</p> <p>3.5 Country procedures will be reviewed each time the global policy is reviewed, instigated by the SM, or a specific incident occurs or the national legislative environment changes, instigated by the SFP.</p>	
<p><u>Putting the policy into practice 1:</u> Recruitment, selection and training</p>	<p>4.1 YUVA will ensure safeguarding is part of any relevant job description. This will include all positions reporting into the CEO, as well as specific positions where employees will be expected to come into direct contact with children and/or adults at risk.</p> <p>4.2 Recruitment processes for these employees will include relevant questions on experience working with children and/or adults at risk, and additional references or background checks will be undertaken for posts identified as high risk.</p> <p>4.3 YUVA will provide necessary training and support to representatives to ensure effective implementation of the policy.</p> <p>4.4 YUVA will ensure that the SM and the SFP have the capacity and capability to fulfil their roles. We will do this through training, support and the revision of roles and responsibilities.</p>	

Standard and aim	Specific areas of activity / indicators	Owner
<p><u>Putting the policy into practice</u></p> <p><u>II:</u></p> <p>Programme activities</p>	<p>5.1 Specific programme guidance will be developed for each thematic area: inclusive education; social inclusion; eye health and NTDs, by the relevant Global Technical Lead (GTL) or Technical Advisor, working with the SM. This should be developed in consultation with children and adults or their representative organisations to ensure it is robust and responsive to actual needs</p> <p>5.2 A safeguarding focused risk assessment will take place during every new project as part of the risk assessment process, during either the Project Design Process (PDP) or the induction phase, with a specific section on children and adults with disabilities in all cases.</p> <p>5.3 A risk assessment will also be conducted for any other activity directly involving adults at risk and/or children, including fundraising and communications activities where contact is made and information on individuals is gathered.</p> <p>5.4 The risk assessment will include mitigating actions, which will be incorporated into project design/documentation. This may include supporting training of partner staff.</p>	

<u>Putting the policy into practice</u> <u>III: Communications activities</u>	<p>6.1 YUVA representatives will ensure that appropriate consent is obtained before images or stories of adults and children are captured or shared.</p> <p>6.2 YUVA will ensure that adults and children are represented in an appropriate way that does not victimise or sexualise them.</p> <p>6.3 YUVA will only collect data on individuals for a specific authorised purpose and it will only be used as intended. It will be stored in a way that complies with relevant legislation and our own data protection procedures.</p> <p>6.4 Any breaches to the security of personal data must be reported and acted on immediately.</p> <p>6.5 YUVA staff will not use YUVA equipment to view, share or access illegal or inappropriate material, including any that specifically includes children.</p>	
<u>Reporting and responding to</u> <u>childsafeguarding incidents</u>	<p>7.1 YUVA will ensure that reporting and incident management procedures to handle incidents of abuse are in place, communicated to staff and effectively used to enable an appropriate and swift investigation of any given case.</p> <p>7.2 All YUVA representatives must also follow appropriate and relevant national legislative and criminal reporting procedures as advised by the SFP.</p>	