

# Kosmos Innovation Center Safeguarding Policy

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Contents

- 1.0 Introduction .....4
- 2.0 Purpose of the Policy .....5
- 3.0 Scope of the Safeguarding Policy .....6
- 4.0 Safeguarding Policy .....6
  - 4.1 Safeguarding Operational Context .....6
  - 4.2 Policy Statement.....6
  - 4.3 Policy Positions .....7
    - 4.3.1 Confidentiality .....7
    - 4.3.3 Data Protection.....7
    - 4.3.4 Acknowledgement .....8
- 5.0 Child / Youth Safeguarding .....8
- 6.0 Adult Safeguarding.....9
- 7.0 Roles and Responsibilities .....9
  - 7.1 KIC Staff Must Always: .....9
  - 7.2 KIC Staff Must Never: .....10
  - 7.3 Board of Directors (BoD) / Executive Director .....10
  - 7.4 Line Managers.....10
  - 7.5 Safeguarding Specialist.....11
  - 7.6 Human Resources .....11
  - 7.7 KIC Working Partners .....12
- 8.0 Safer Recruitment and Employee Lifecycle .....12
- 9.0 Induction .....13
- 10. Training .....13
- 11.0 Safeguarding and Programming .....13
  - 11.1 Safer Programming .....13
  - 11.2 Complaints Mechanisms .....14
  - 11.3 Monitoring and Evaluation .....15
  - 11.4 Content Gathering .....15
    - 11.4.1 External Visitors .....15

12.0	Prevention.....	16
13.0	Management of Safeguarding Concerns.....	16
13.1	Reporting Mechanisms.....	16
13.2	Management of Safeguarding Reports.....	18
13.3	Incident Management Process .....	19
13.4	Retaliation against Complainants, Victims and Witnesses .....	21
13.5	False or Malicious Complaints.....	22
14.0	Responding to Concerns and Complaints.....	22
14.1	Disciplinary Measures and Support.....	22
14.2	Support Options.....	22
15.0	Glossary of Terms.....	23

## 1.0 Introduction

KIC is dedicated to working to fight all forms of abuse to create a world that values everyone's rights and dignity. We understand that, in order to operate with integrity, we must "walk the talk" and make sure that everyone who interacts with KIC is protected from any kind of harm, prejudice or abuse.

KIC will not tolerate any form of abuse, exploitation or harm carried out towards children (defined as anyone under the age of 18), rights holders, community members, or Vulnerable adult (defined as someone above the age of 18 who, for physical, social, economic, or environmental factors are more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and other harms).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that procedures are in place to protect children, and communities we work with, including Vulnerable adult, from sexual abuse, exploitation, or other harmful and inappropriate behaviour, carried out by any staff of the KIC or its partners.

Every aspect of KIC's work must be carried out in a way that ensures the rights and dignity of children, community members, and Vulnerable adult are upheld. We are committed to working with them to ensure that they are not simply safe *from* harm but safe *to* realise their rights and be active agents of change.

KIC is dedicated to both preventing all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse as well as vigorously responding when these harms do occur. This implies that we respond promptly and forcefully to reports of abuse. We take all concerns seriously. KIC is dedicated to working with complainants and survivors to ensure they are integral to any response, are not further injured or disempowered by any proceedings, and receive assistance throughout the process of dealing with safeguarding. No one will be victimized for filing a complaint.

KIC views any form of sexual violence as a gross violation of human rights. We will not tolerate abuse, exploitation, or harm carried out towards our own employees, rights holders, partners, communities, or anyone we come into contact with through our work.

We recognize that all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, and other safeguarding concerns, including abuse of children and Vulnerable adult, are rooted in an imbalance of power. Because of the power imbalances inherent within the wider social norms and structures in which we work, we have a duty to prevent and respond strongly to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. We recognize that when individuals in our sector carry out sexual exploitation and abuse towards those, we have a duty to protect, it inflicts harm and breaches human rights, breaks the trust placed in our sector, and jeopardizes the credibility of KIC. Thus, KIC safeguarding policy is to address all safeguarding needs of KIC, its partners and all other associated with KIC programming.

## 2.0 Purpose of the Policy

This safeguarding policy is grounded in the legislation of the: (a) laws of Ghana, (b) Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which asserts children's right to protection 'from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child; (c) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of people at any age and in the equal rights of men and women.

We acknowledge that KIC employees enjoy additional authority and privileges due to the nature of their work in the development space. Through our engagement in the development sector, we are dedicated to protecting everyone who interacts with KIC from abuse of that authority and privilege.

The purpose of this policy is to protect people we work with, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with the Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC).

This includes harm arising from:

1. The conduct of staff or personnel associated with KIC.
2. The design and implementation of KIC's programs and activities

This policy provides guidance and direction to anyone associated with KIC so that:

- i. All KIC staff and other partners understand the **importance** of preventing abuse, harm, and their responsibility to ensure that they and their work do not deliberately cause harm to anyone, especially Vulnerable adult, children and community members.
- ii. All KIC staff and other partners understand **their role** in preventing harm and abuse, and the consequences of breaching this policy.
- iii. All KIC staff and other partners understand **their responsibility** to report any concerns relating to harm and abuse and have access to clear guidelines on how to report suspected abuse.
- iv. All **organisational processes and structures** reflect our duty of care towards Vulnerable adult, children and community members, and put in place procedures to safeguard them in every aspect of our work so that we build a culture free from abuse, discrimination, and harm.
- v. KIC commits to uphold the highest level of **personal and professional conduct** amongst its staff, consultants, volunteers and partners working in or visiting all programming contexts and spaces, ensuring zero tolerance of all forms of harm and abuse against affected populations especially Vulnerable adult, children and community members.

### 3.0 Scope of the Safeguarding Policy

This policy is binding for:

1. All staff contracted by KIC: All KIC employees, whether full-time, part-time, or employed on fixed-term contracts, must abide by this policy.
2. Any other representatives who work with KIC, such as partners, volunteers, consultants, interns, programme visitors (such as donors), and other people serving as KIC representatives.

The processes specified in this policy are available for use by all employees and representatives listed above, both categories of whom can file a complaint.

KIC Management Team, and Safeguarding Specialist hold overall accountability for this policy and its implementation. They are responsible for ensuring the policy is reviewed and updated annually.

### 4.0 Safeguarding Policy

#### 4.1 Safeguarding Operational Context

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, well-being, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. In this sector, we understand safeguarding to mean protecting people, including children and Vulnerable adult, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programs and responding robustly when harm occurs.

Our donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

These definitions draw from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programs, partners, and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing, and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable, and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialize. Those systems must be survivor-centered and protect those accused until proven guilty. The Safeguarding Policy puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the center of all we do.

#### 4.2 Policy Statement

KIC believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, cultural identity has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. KIC will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

It is our responsibility to ensure team members, operations and programs **do no** harm to the people and communities we work with or put anyone, especially vulnerable populations, at risk of abuse or exploitation. We take this responsibility seriously and we continue to invest in and strengthen our approach to safeguarding. We are committed to preventing any form of abuse, putting survivors/victims first, providing them with the support they need, ensuring transparency with donors and local communities, and taking corrective action.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, protection from abuse and harm. KIC commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of **prevention, reporting and response**.

### 4.3 Policy Positions

#### 4.3.1 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is vitally important to Safeguarding. We are committed to working with survivors/complainants and all others involved in an incident management process in a confidential and respectful manner. Breaches of confidentiality undermine confidence and trust in KIC's Safeguarding and complaints management processes and in the organisation itself. Maintaining confidentiality around people's personal data and information is particularly important when managing issues relating to sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse. At the point of disclosure to the final outcome of any investigation, every effort will be made to maintain and promote confidentiality in order to protect the safety and privacy of everyone involved.

Information must be shared on a 'Need to Know' basis – that is, only those who need to be informed so they can support an investigation or because they hold overall accountability, and they will receive only as much information as they need in order to be effective.

If information is shared confidentially which relates to a child or suggests that someone's life is in danger, then action will need to be taken outside of standard confidentiality procedures to ensure that everyone is safe. This will be managed on a case-by-case basis, and the safety and well-being of the child or adult in question is always paramount. As noted above, only those who need to know will be informed so they can take effective action.

#### 4.3.3 Data Protection

KIC will ensure that, it complies with local and international data protection laws when gathering, storing, or sharing any data relating to individuals and Safeguarding (e.g., in our monitoring and evaluation processes (M&E), communications, and incident management approach), and will follow the guidance on retaining data on incident management.

#### 4.3.4 Acknowledgement

All KIC staff, associated personnel and partners that work with vulnerable adults, children and youth will be required to sign an **acknowledgement form** confirming that he/she agrees to comply with the KIC Safeguarding Policy and that he/she understands that disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found guilty of abuse of a child, youth and vulnerable adults.

#### 5.0 Child / Youth Safeguarding

KIC is committed to the principles and rights promoted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). We believe that **all children** have a right to be protected from abuse, exploitation, and harm. We recognize that some children can be additionally vulnerable because of their gender, ethnic origin, disability status or other factors. We have a responsibility to protect the welfare of all children, recognizing their different needs and experiences. In all actions concerning children, their welfare is paramount.

KIC recognizes that we have a duty to respond to all concerns raised with us relating to children, regardless of whether or not the alleged harm results from actions taken or not taken by KIC.

KIC staff and associated personnel **MUST** not:

1. Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
2. Sexually abuse or exploit children.
3. Subject a Child or Youth to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect.
4. Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.
5. Abuse or exploit a Child or Youth or behave in any way that places a Child or Youth at risk of harm.
6. Exchange money, gifts, employment, goods, or services for sex with a Child or Youth, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour or any other behaviour that could be deemed exploitative of a Child or Youth
7. Have a Child or Youth they are working with stay overnight at their home unsupervised or sleep in the same room or bed with a Child or Youth
8. Offend, insult, humiliate or degrade a Child or Youth or perpetrate any form of Emotional Abuse
9. Discriminate or provide favourable treatment to one Child or Youth
10. Restrain a Child or Youth
11. Discipline a Child or Youth using any form of physical contact, or emotional or psychological pressure, abuse, or intimidation.
12. Kiss or coaxing a Child to kiss the organizational personnel.
13. Engage in extended hugging, tickling or coaxing of a child to hug the organizational personnel.



14. Touch a Child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
15. Carry a Child or have them sit on the lap of the Organizational personnel.
16. Be alone with a Child.
17. Engage in prolonged physical contact with a Child.
18. Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.
19. Give or apply any medication to Children and Youth, unless you are medical doctor, nurse, or other professional medical personnel.

The above is neither an exhaustive nor exclusive list and the KIC will consider all related actions and behaviour which may compromise the rights and Protection of Children and Youth.

## 6.0 Adult Safeguarding

KIC staff and associated personnel MUST not:

1. Sexually abuse or exploit at-risk adults.
2. Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

Additionally, KIC staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

1. Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
2. Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a KIC staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

## 7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Individuals are not required to disclose something they have personally experienced, but all staff members and other representatives have a duty and responsibility to report any suspicions or instances of harassment, exploitation, or abuse. Failure to report to an appropriate person, when staff is in the know of another staff's abuse, is a breach of this policy and could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

### 7.1 KIC Staff Must Always:

- a. Ensure their behaviour is based on KIC's values, adheres to this policy, and always upholds and promotes the rights and welfare Vulnerable adult, children and youth.
- b. Promote and raise awareness of this policy to everyone they come into contact within their work.
- c. Ensure they are aware of their Safeguarding Specialist who is responsible for advising on and mitigating risk in line with this policy.
- d. Report any suspicions, concerns, or behaviours that breach this policy to the appropriate person(s).
- e. Ensure that the rights of Vulnerable adult, children and youth are central to any activities carried out in their area of work.

## 7.2 KIC Staff Must Never:

- a. Perpetrate abuse towards anyone they come into contact with through their work. This policy addresses harms carried out towards children and Vulnerable adult.
- b. Engage in any sexual activity with children and Vulnerable adult.
- c. Engage in any kind of exploitative or harmful behaviour towards members of a community that KIC works with.
- d. Raise malicious complaints or use the policy for purposes other than what it is intended for.

## 7.3 Board of Directors (BoD) / Executive Director

The BoD/Executive Director **must always**:

- i. Create a safe environment where staff and others feel able to raise concerns without fear of retribution.
- ii. Ensure a Safeguarding Specialist is in place, having undergone a selection process, who will raise awareness of Safeguarding and act as a reporting point for suspicions, concerns, and complaints.
- iii. Ensure adequate funding is in place to support Safeguarding activities (e.g. funding to ensure that all staff receive annual training).
- iv. Work with Safeguarding Panel Team to respond robustly when any concerns relating to sexual exploitation and abuse of rights holders or community members are raised.
- v. Ensure that procedures for reporting and investigating suspected cases of abuse and exploitation are followed and ensuring they are in line with this policy and local laws, including reporting to appropriate authorities for investigation and follow up.
- vi. Ensure that the relevant disciplinary procedures are implemented for staff members who have violated this policy.

## 7.4 Line Managers

Line Managers **must always**:

- i. Create a safe environment in their area of responsibility and directly with the staff they manage, to ensure that staff and others feel able to raise concerns without fear of retribution.
- ii. Ensure staff members in their line of authority receive an induction on this policy and that any concerns raised about staff in the line of management are addressed through appropriate means (e.g. investigation, performance management).
- iii. Ensure that staff members are aware of their responsibilities and accountability for the welfare of rights holders and community members, including Vulnerable adult during KIC activities.
- iv. Ensure that staff members are aware of their responsibilities for reporting and the procedures for doing so.
- v. Ensure that all processes, procedures, and activities are carried out in a way which seeks to minimize the risk to rights holders and communities (e.g. through carrying out routine risk assessments).

- vi. When managing a recruitment, work with HR to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to prevent individuals who may harm others from entering KIC (e.g. through safer recruitment processes).
- vii. Ensure that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour towards rights holders and community members by KIC or partner staff members does not go unchallenged.
- viii. Ensure this policy is included as part of any partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding (MoU) with KIC partners.

## 7.5 Safeguarding Specialist

### Safeguarding Specialist **must always**:

- a. Work with others to create a safe environment where staff and others feel able to raise concerns without fear of retribution.
- b. Ensure that this policy is displayed at prominent places within the KIC office, as well as online, and to make it accessible to all members of staff.
- c. Ensure that all inductions include a discussion of this policy.
- d. Deliver training to all staff on this policy and other policies that fall within the Safeguarding concerns remit.
- e. Work with others to ensure that the values, commitments, and procedures set forth in this policy are embedded throughout all KIC's programs and activities, and those of our partners.
- f. Ensure that all raised concerns and complaints relating to Safeguarding are channel to the Safeguarding Panel Team
- g. Work with Safeguarding Panel Team to address concerns relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, and ensure incident management is carried out in line with KIC Safeguarding approach.

## 7.6 Human Resources

### Human Resources **must always**:

- a) Work with others to create a safe environment where staff and others feel able to raise concerns without fear of retribution.
- b) Work with the Safeguarding Specialist to ensure that this policy is displayed at prominent places within the office, as well as online, and to make it accessible to all members of staff.
- c) Work with the Safeguarding Specialist to ensure that all inductions include a discussion of this policy.
- d) Ensure that the values, commitments, and procedures set forth in this policy are embedded throughout the employee life cycle (including safer recruitment, performance management, and exit).
- e) Work with the Safeguarding Stakeholder Panel to address any concerns relating to abuse or exploitation of rights holders and communities, including Vulnerable adult by providing strong employment law and employee relations advice, and ensuring that all relevant KIC policies and processes are followed correctly throughout the incident management process.

## 7.7 KIC Working Partners

- a. KIC partners must abide by KIC's safeguarding related policies. All memorandum of understandings (MoU) with partner organisations and consultancy agreements with consultants and suppliers should include this policy as an appendix when starting any project. Breaches can lead to termination of contractual and/or partnership agreements.
- b. KIC will work with all partners to ensure they receive training on KIC's Safeguarding policies and approach, and to ensure that spaces are created to share knowledge on best practice to address sexual exploitation and abuse and recognise the expertise of our partners in this area as well as our own approach.
- c. Staff working with partners must ensure that partner organizations and their staff sign up and abide by the KIC's Safeguarding Policy. KIC must work with partners to carry out Safeguarding risk assessments and/or ensure that partners carry out their own Safeguarding risk assessments.
- d. KIC partners, by the nature of their work, interact with at-risk communities and will therefore be aware of sensitive information concerning **Vulnerable adult and children**. KIC will work with partners to ensure that partners have a robust reporting mechanism for partner staff and community members to access. KIC and partners must have agreements in place to ensure that concerns relating to Safeguarding (for partner staff, rights holders, and community members) is shared through designated roles to maintain confidentiality.
- e. Concerns regarding partner staff members must be reported immediately via the reporting mechanisms detailed below. If KIC receives a complaint about a member of staff at a partner organisation, KIC will work with the partner to ensure this is responded to quickly and appropriately. If there is reason to believe that a complaint has been dealt with inappropriately or inadequately by a partner, KIC must consider whether they will withdraw funding or end the relationship.

## 8.0 Safer Recruitment and Employee Lifecycle

In line with best practice, stringent recruitment processes will be put in place in order to reduce the likelihood of engaging someone who may pose a Safeguarding risk to children, adult at risk and to staff and other representatives within the organisation. The following steps must be included in all Recruitment and Selection procedures:

- i. Job adverts and job descriptions clearly detail any role/ responsibilities relating to **children and Vulnerable adult**, and the organisational values and commitment to Safeguarding. The job description is to be used as the primary basis of assessing an applicant's abilities.
- ii. All interviews will include questions that assess an applicant's understanding of Safeguarding (including child safeguarding).
- iii. Interviews for positions that involve working with Vulnerable adult or children must include behavioural based questions that assess the candidate's suitability to work with Vulnerable adult or children.
- iv. Gaps in employment history will be discussed at interview.

- v. KIC will not knowingly appoint any person with a history of perpetrating any form of harassment, exploitation, and abuse, e.g., vulnerable adults abuse, child abuse, or Gender Based Violence. KIC will ensure that recruitment of staff and other representatives will include reference checks (written and verbal where necessary).
- vi. Consent will be sought from the successful applicant to request two references, including one from their most recent employer (or place of education), which provides, where permitted, the reason for leaving, and where appropriate, whether the candidate is suitable to work with Vulnerable adult.
- vii. Staff and other representatives in roles that involve having direct access to rights holders and community members, particularly children and Vulnerable adult, will require a self-disclosure of any convictions (relating to vulnerable adults abuse and child abuse in any form) prior to interview stage.
- viii. All performance management processes and appraisals must include an assessment of how the individual upholds KIC's values and Safeguarding intersects with their work.
- ix. Ensure exit processes are carried out in person or remotely, learning is recorded and acted upon as appropriate, and any Safeguarding concerns raised at this stage are addressed appropriately
- x. Ensure references are provided in line with our HR policies, and that information on staff misconduct/disciplinary proceedings is shared with the prospective employer in line with best practice and our HR procedures.

## 9.0 Induction

The Safeguarding Specialist and HR will ensure all joining staff and other representatives have an induction on KIC's Safeguarding approach and this policy **no later than one month** after they have been appointed. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Specialist to ensure that this briefing is carried out.

## 10. Training

Regular training and refresher courses on Safeguarding must be planned and delivered for all staff and partners on a regular basis. This can include but is not limited to:

- a. KIC Safeguarding policy.
- b. Information on how to recognise sexual exploitation and abuse, and other forms of abuse.
- c. Information on how to report sexual exploitation and abuse, and other forms of abuse.

## 11.0 Safeguarding and Programming

### 11.1 Safer Programming

KIC recognises that preventing harm and abuse must be integral to its development work. We must recognise that **programme participants including children and Vulnerable adult** can be harmed as a result of poorly designed programs and projects, and related

activities. Staff members responsible for programme or project design and implementation must ensure that Safeguarding is accounted for at all stages of the programme/project cycle.

- i. Ensure the active participation of **rights holders and communities, including Vulnerable adult** in assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs through the systematic use of participatory methods.
- ii. Recognise that sexual exploitation and abuse is often grounded in gender and other inequalities, KIC will ensure that development and programme activities are conducted in a gender-sensitive manner.
- iii. A complaints mechanism should be set up to receive both safeguarding and non-safeguarding related concerns. We must enable concerns to be raised internally and externally, be transparent and accessible to the people being supported, and ensure that concerns are responded to in a timely and robust manner.
- iv. Ensure that this policy is in place and communicated to and understood by KIC staff and other representatives, and the people we work with.
- v. Ensure that all responses are developed in a manner that balances respect for due process while prioritising the safety, dignity, and rights of survivors.
- vi. Ensure that assistance for those affected is carried out in line with KIC's values.
- vii. Ensure that all staff and other representatives recognise their responsibility to maintain an environment that is free of sexual exploitation and abuse and to report any abuse they suspect or witness, whether within KIC or outside, in line with the reporting protocols outlined in this policy.

## 11.2 Complaints Mechanisms

As part of embedding Safeguarding into all programme design and activities, complaints mechanisms must be established to ensure that **programme participants including children and Vulnerable adult** are able to raise concerns. Staff should work in a participatory way to create, strengthen, and evaluate existing complaints mechanisms in line with best practice, and ensure that the mechanisms used are relevant to the local context. As part of KIC commitment to accountability, staff must ensure that policies and procedures are shared with all beneficiaries, including children and Vulnerable adult so they can provide feedback and be instrumental in developing our approach.

The Safeguarding Specialist can work with relevant teams to ensure that complaints mechanisms are accessible, inclusive, survivor-centred, and relevant. (e.g., to ensure that people with disabilities can access complaints mechanisms and report concerns). It is critical that any complaints mechanisms provide a variety of ways of reporting, recognising that many people prefer to disclose allegations of abuse or exploitation to someone they trust, and that people are assured of confidentiality.

Staff should work with relevant internal teams to build complaints mechanisms to ensure that children are able to raise concerns and have a voice in how safe spaces are created.

Alongside developing complaints mechanisms, staff and partners must continually engage with **stakeholders** about KIC's values, what behaviour is and is not appropriate, their rights, and how to report concerns.

### 11.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of embedding Safeguarding into all programme design and activities, staff must ensure that all Monitoring and Evaluation activities address Safeguarding considerations and that data is analysed and shared so that lessons can be learnt, and good practice disseminated. It is necessary to make sure that Monitoring and Evaluation activities such as complaints mechanisms, focus groups, and surveys are accessible to **all relevant stakeholders**, for example older people or people with disabilities. From initial needs assessments to final project reports, Monitoring and Evaluation is a vital part of safer programming and ensure safe outcomes for rights holders and communities.

### 11.4 Content Gathering

The following are practices that staff members must follow in the collection, storage, and dissemination of communications material with a specific focus on children and Vulnerable adult recognising that some Vulnerable adult, for a range of factors, may not be able to give informed consent:

- a) The vulnerable adults's best interests must always be the primary consideration. Content gathering must always be a positive experience for the vulnerable adults, and they must be in a safe and conducive environment protected from any kind of abuse.
- b) Data will be gathered, stored, and shared in line with local and international data protection laws.
- c) Seek the adult at risk's free, prior, and informed consent where possible. The vulnerable adults need to fully understand why they are being interviewed/photographed. For example, you could show examples of how their photos could be used.
- d) If the vulnerable adults cannot give informed consent, ensure that full parental or guardian informed consent is received before gathering or using any content relating to Vulnerable adult (e.g. interviews, images, or footage of Vulnerable adult) and that they understand the purpose of this activity and how the images or footage will be used without posing any risk to the vulnerable adults. Never photograph, video or interview a reluctant vulnerable adult, even with parental or guardian consent.
- e) Never gather content that could shame, humiliate or degrade a vulnerable adults, put them at risk immediately or at a later date, or perpetrate any form of abuse, discrimination and exploitation.
- f) Payment and/or gifts must not be given following content gathering as it can be confused with payment for information.
- g) If a contractor is used to gather content, they need to have a contract with KIC and have been briefed on this policy.

#### 11.4.1 External Visitors

- i. Donors and other visitors should receive a briefing on our values and Safeguarding approach (including instructions on content gathering, appropriate behaviours and how to raise concerns) before any visit.

- ii. All content gathering should be carried out by authorised staff or partner. All visitors must receive a pre-travel briefing on KIC's approach to content gathering.
- iii. A visitor should always be accompanied by a KIC staff member or partner while visiting any of the Agritech Challenge campuses, Blueskies farms, businesses or any other related KIC institution or partner.

## 12.0 Prevention

Preventing exploitation, abuse and harassment is to be done by:

- a. identifying safeguarding risks,
- b. preventing persons with the intent to harm who work with/ or for KIC, represent KIC or are partners to KIC,
- c. providing clarity about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for KIC staff, partners, consultants/contractors and representatives.

KIC will ensure that personnel avoid any behaviour or conduct that compromises the safety and protection of at-risk adult, Children and Youth within its activities, operations and programs. KIC will implement the following strategies to prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns that may arise:

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

## 13.0 Management of Safeguarding Concerns

### 13.1 Reporting Mechanisms

KIC will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the participants we work with. Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels will be protected. KIC will also accept and investigate third party complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

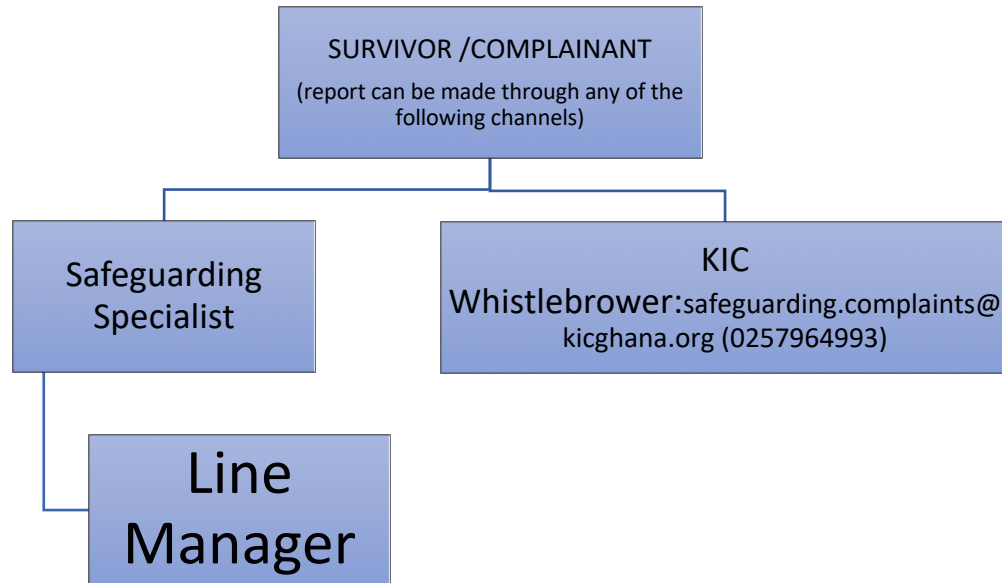
- a. **Safeguarding Specialist:** Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the safeguarding specialist. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to the Safeguarding Specialist they may report to any other appropriate staff member, this could be a senior manager or member of the HR team or anonymously through the Whistleblowing hotline/mail.



Staff members can report concerns or violations of safeguarding to:

- i. **Whistleblowing Email Address:**  
[Safeguarding.Complaints@kicghana.org](mailto:Safeguarding.Complaints@kicghana.org)
  - ii. Mercy Tuffour (mtuffour@kicghana.org)
  - iii. 0257964993
- b. **A trusted Manager or supervisor:** Individuals with feedback, concerns or complaints can make their reports to anyone in a Management role at KIC who they trust. Those in Management roles can elevate feedback or concerns by reaching out to the Safeguarding Specialist, or they can make a report to the Whistleblowing Hotline on an individual's behalf.
- c. **Safeguarding Focal Points:** They are the program officers at the various partner universities who will coordinate, support, and advise on the implementation of Safeguarding in programme operational areas. Focal Points are trained and trusted team members available to receive feedback, concerns, or complaints. They can also aid in making a report through the Whistleblowing Hotline on an individual's behalf.
- d. **Reporting avenues for partners, volunteers, and interns:** Individuals who work with KIC but who are not formally employed can make reports through whichever option they are most comfortable: through the Safeguarding Specialist, KIC Management/staff, a Safeguarding focal person or the Whistleblowing Hotline, Anonymous text, and emails.
- e. All staff and other representatives are required to report if:
- i. Participants **including children and vulnerable** adults alleges that they or another person is experiencing or at risk of experiencing sexual exploitation or abuse or other forms of abuse- whether carried out by KIC staff, representatives, or others.
  - ii. A staff member or other representative suspects that someone connected to KIC is or may be about to carry out an abuse or harm other persons.
  - iii. A staff member or other representative suspects that someone external to KIC (e.g., a Teacher or Community Leader) is or may be about to carry out abuse or harm participants including children, youth or **vulnerable adult**.
- f. If a staff member or other KIC representative **does not** report an incident or suspicion, they will be in breach of the safeguarding policy.

Figure 1: Persons to Report Safeguarding Concerns to:



### 13.2 Management of Safeguarding Reports

The following table contains the nature of safeguarding concern and the corresponding response.

Nature of Concern	Response
Allegation about KIC staff	Concerns about KIC staff will be reported to the Safeguarding Specialist who will call for the constitution of the safeguarding panel team to assess the issue and appropriate actions taken.
Allegation about staff at a Partner Organisation	Concerns about staff at a Partner Organisation must be reported to the Safeguarding Specialist. Report will be made to the partner and work with the partner to ensure the matter is addressed swiftly and appropriately. This may be through the partner's internal process or through a joint process agreed by KIC and the partner. If KIC has concerns that a complaint has been dealt with inappropriately or inadequately by a partner, KIC should raise concerns to the appropriate channels in the partner organisation and if these concerns are not addressed, they must consider whether they will withdraw funding or end the relationship.
Allegation relating to criminal activity and/or relating to a child where others have a concern to investigate	Allegations that staff or other representatives have carried out a criminal activity will be assessed by the Safeguarding Specialist and the Safeguarding Panel Team. A referrer will be made to the appropriate body to handle the issue.

	<p>KIC is not a child protection agency and does not have the expertise required to carry out investigations of child abuse itself. This will be carried out by external experts brought in specifically for this purpose.</p> <p>For allegations in which external bodies (e.g., police) rather than KIC have a concern to investigate, KIC will support the external process. KIC will monitor the external response to ensure that as far as possible it is carried out in line with KIC's values.</p>
KIC staff member or other representative raises concerns about how a complaint was managed and wants to appeal the decision	KIC staff members and representatives who disagree with actions taken must appeal. Safeguarding Panel Team will work with the KIC Board to review the case. They can repeal the decision made earlier, if they find in favour of the staff member or other representative making the appeal.
Allegation raised against the Executive Director	Concerns raised about the Executive Director must be submitted to the Board.
Allegation about a Safeguarding Specialist	Concerns raised about Safeguarding Specialist must be reported to the Executive Director who will take a decision on how to respond to the allegation.
Allegation about anyone in the Safeguarding Panel Team	Concerns raised about anyone in the Safeguarding Panel Team must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead and the Executive Director. They will ensure that appropriate action is taken.

**13.3 Incident Management Process**

Anyone can raise a concern or complaint. An individual can raise a complaint even if they have no evidence other than their own experience, recognizing that sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse usually occur away from the public eye and therefore it can be difficult to produce evidence (e.g., a witness). KIC will work with survivors and complainants to understand how they would like the issue they raised to be addressed; this policy does not prejudice the right of survivors and complainants to use external procedures (e.g., criminal justice procedures) where that is their preference to do so. Support options will be offered to survivors and complainants regardless of whether or not they decide to make a formal complaint.

If a survivor or complainant makes a formal complaint and wants an investigation to be carried out, or if KIC takes the view that they have a duty of care to carry out an investigation, then an investigation process will be initiated.

The KIC must put measures in place to ensure that any investigations carried out are objective, timely, fair, and transparent and built on KIC Safeguarding approach. All parties should be able to participate in the investigation without fear of retaliation.

### Step 1: Complaint received (timeframe: actions taken within 48 hours)

- a) Within 24 hours, the complaint is acknowledged, and the Safeguarding Specialist (or other staff member as appropriate) will engage with complainant/survivor to ensure they are safe and their concerns are understood.
- b) The Safeguarding Panel Team will evaluate all cases to assess what action can be taken. If an investigation cannot be carried out (e.g., if survivor does not want an investigation or there is insufficient information to proceed) then the Panel will close the case and assess what other actions can be taken to address concerns e.g., awareness raising.
- c) Within 48 hours the Safeguarding Panel Team will meet.
- d) Risk assessment carried out to address any immediate security or welfare concerns, and legal guidance sought.
- e) Investigation Team and Decision-Making Panel are appointed.

### Step 2: Investigation (timeframe: approx. 4 weeks but this may differ depending on nature and complexity of case)

All incident reports will be thoroughly investigated. However, when an allegation is made against staff or associated personnel, the accused personnel will be immediately suspended from all duties with KIC (with pay, if applicable) to protect Children, Youth and vulnerable adults from further potential harm.

The Safeguarding Specialist will convene the Safeguarding Panel Team to review the case at hand. KIC will retain written records of all reports of abuse. All files of on-going investigations will be kept private and confidential.

- a) Following the investigation guidelines set out, an investigation can include carrying out any interviews, gathering any available evidence, and producing an investigation report.
- b) The complainant/survivor should be interviewed first (or provide a written response to questions submitted by the Investigation Team where a verbal interview is not possible), followed by any witnesses and the complainant if not the survivor, and then the subject of complaint. It is important to note that sexual exploitation and abuse in all its forms usually occurs away from the public eye and it therefore may be difficult to produce evidence. An individual can raise a complaint even if they can point to no objective evidence other than their own experience.

The Investigation Report is submitted to the Decision-Making Panel.

### Step 3: Decision (timeframe: actions taken within 72 hours)

An investigation could result in any of the following outcomes:

1. No further action (for example if there is insufficient information to follow up, or the report refers to incidents outside the KIC's remit)
2. Investigation is required to gather further information
3. Immediate disciplinary action if no further information needed
4. Referral to relevant authorities for support which may include but not limited to:
  - a) Psychosocial care or counselling
  - b) Medical assistance
  - c) Protection or security assistance
5. A database of the contact details of service providers will be maintained at the regional offices to support when appropriate upon the consent of the survivor.
6. The Decision-Making Panel reviews then report to the investigation Team and take a decision on the report and its findings.
7. The Decision-Making Panel or others as appropriate will carry out any recommendations agreed on (e.g., disciplinary hearing, termination, awareness raising, policy development) with support from HR as required.

### Step 4: Outcomes shared, and lessons learnt (timeframe: up to 1 week following decision made)

- a. Decision Making Panel document the decision and inform the complainant and subject of complaint.
- b. The Safeguarding Panel Team is informed of the outcome.
- c. The subject of complaint and the complainant have the right to appeal against the decision.
- d. A case conference convened so that the Safeguarding Panel Team, Investigation Team, and Decision-Making Panel can discuss learning from the case. Feedback must be sought from the survivor/complainant and incorporated into the lessons learnt conversation. Lessons learnt to be shared as appropriate, removing identifiable information.

KIC is not a protection agency and does not have the expertise required to carry out investigations into vulnerable adults abuse. This will be carried out by external experts brought in specifically for this purpose. However, KIC will refer cases to appropriate professionals and organisations and will ensure that referrals are made to professionals and organisations that act in line with KIC's values and puts the welfare of the vulnerable adults, child or any other person as the highest priority

#### **13.4 Retaliation against Complainants, Victims and Witnesses**

KIC will take action against any staff or other representatives who seek to or carry out retaliatory action (e.g., intimidation, threatening behaviour) against complainants, survivors, witnesses or any others involved or believed to be involved in an incident

management process. Staff who are found to have done this will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### 13.5 False or Malicious Complaints

False or malicious allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse are extremely rare. However, if a member of KIC staff is found to have made an allegation that they knew to be false, they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. It must be noted that if a case is not upheld that does not mean that the complaint was false, rather, that there was insufficient evidence.

## 14.0 Responding to Concerns and Complaints

### 14.1 Disciplinary Measures and Support

KIC will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations. KIC has a zero-tolerance of abuse and will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.

KIC will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

### 14.2 Support Options

Support will be offered to survivors/complainants regardless of whether a formal response is carried out (e.g., an investigation). Support will also be offered as appropriate to others involved in an incident management process, recognising the impact this can have, for example on witnesses and those accused of carrying out inappropriate or harmful behaviours.

Survivors and complainants can choose when they would like to take up the support options available to them.

KIC will ensure support for children is provided by appropriate professionals and organisations. KIC will ensure that cases are referred to them, and that due diligence is taken to ensure that they act in line with KIC's values and puts the welfare of the child as the highest priority.

### Safeguarding Complaint Upheld/Not Upheld

- An investigation or other process is **upheld** when its findings are in favour of the complainant.
- An investigation or other process is **not upheld** when it finds that there is insufficient evidence to confirm that the alleged inappropriate behaviour did take place or that, on the balance of probability, it is most likely that the behaviour did not take place.
- In some cases, a complaint may be **partially upheld**, this is when it may not be possible to uphold all parts of a complaint, but some aspects of the complaint may be upheld.

## 15.0 Glossary of Terms

### Beneficiary

Someone who directly receives goods or services from KIC's programme.

### Child

A person below the age of 18. **Child (or Children)** is defined as any person, of either sex who is under the age of 18 years, unless the national laws in which the Organization is carrying out the Children's programs prescribe a lower age of majority.

### Harm

Psychological, physical, emotional and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

### Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming and isolation.

### Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

### Safeguarding

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

**Abuse** includes Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Exploitation.

**Physical Abuse** is the deliberate application of force by any person (including Children, Youth or Other Persons) to any part of the body of the Child and/or Youth, which results or may result in non-accidental harm or injury to a Child and/or Youth. Physical Abuse may include shaking, choking, biting, kicking, burning, poisoning, holding a Child and/or Youth under water, or any other harmful or dangerous use of force or restraint.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when a person (including Children, Youth or Other Persons) uses a Child and/or Youth for sexual purposes, without the consent of the Child and/or Youth in question or other persons. Sexual Abuse includes fondling, intercourse, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial Exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials. Sexual Abuse may include, but is not limited to, permitting, encouraging or requiring a Child and/or Youth to engage in any of the following activities if they occur between a person (including Children, Youth or Other Persons) and a Child and/or Youth or other persons:

- a. using or engaging in sexually provocative language, acts or conduct towards a Child and/or Youth or other persons.
- b. rough-housing or engaging in conduct which involves physical contact with a Child and/or Youth and which is sexually suggestive in nature.
- c. kissing, fondling, caressing, patting or pinching a Child and/or Youth or other persons or engaging in sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct designed to sexually stimulate either or both of Organizational Personnel and Child and/or Youth.
- d. using sexual remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunting about a Child and/or Youth or other person's body or sexual orientation or uttering, either verbally or in writing, invitations, requests or sexually suggestive remarks or displaying pornographic or sexually suggestive material to a Child and/or Youth or other persons.
- e. conduct of a sexual nature for the stimulation, gratification, profit and self-interest of Organizational Personnel who are in a position of trust or authority or with whom the Child and/or Youth or other persons are in a relationship of dependency; and/or
- f. prostitution or production of material of a pornographic nature.

**Emotional Abuse** involves actions towards a Child and/or Youth or other persons that cause or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders in the Child and/or Youth. Emotional Abuse also occurs when a person (including Children, Youth or Other Persons) makes verbal threats, socially isolates a Child and/or Youth or other persons, intimidates, exploits, terrorizes, or routinely makes unreasonable demands on a Child and/or Youth or other persons.

**Exploitation** refers to situations whereby an abuser makes unfair profit and/or takes advantage of unequal power and/or economic status of a Child and/or Youth or other persons.

**Neglect/failure** to provide occurs when a Child's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or caregivers do not provide the requisite attention to the Child's emotional, psychological, or physical development when they have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so; or failure to protect the Child from exposure to danger.

**Best Interests of Children and Youth:** The principle of best interests applies to all actions concerning Children and Youth or other persons and requires active measures to protect their rights. These measures will promote Child and Youth safety; physical, emotional and developmental needs; well-being of Children and Youth or other persons; and support and assist Children and Youth or other persons to realize their rights. This includes their participation to ensure that their opinions are heard in matters affecting them.

**Organization:** All organizations and individuals who are involved in carrying out KIC programs directed at assisting Youth or other persons, which includes, but is not limited to, contractors, subcontractors (including their employees, volunteers, directors and



officers and any other personnel), as well as any consultants or affiliates that may work with such contractors or subcontractors, as applicable.

**Organizational Personnel:** Includes directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants, and any other person who performs duties involving Youth or other persons either on a volunteer or on a paid basis, whether on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis, for the Organization.

**Other Person** means any person, of either sex, who is older than Youth as defined herein, i.e. "Other Person" means a person who is aged 35 years of age or older.

**Protection of Children and Youth:** The responsibility, actions and measures taken to prevent and respond to Abuse, exploitation and violence against Children and Youth.

**Youth** is defined as any person, of either sex, who is above the age of 18 years and under the age of 35 years

**Survivor** is the person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At-risk adult** is sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may need care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm