

## 6. GOGLA Safeguarding policy

### 6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children and at-risk adults, from any harm that may be caused by GOGLA. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with GOGLA.
- The design and implementation of GOGLA's programs and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by GOGLA and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding have also different other GOGLA policies and procedures associated with them, namely:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy
- Whistleblowing policy

### 6.2 Scope

This policy applies to all GOGLA representatives; staff; and contractors.

### 6.3 Definition of Safeguarding

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

In the development sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programs.

### 6.4 Policy Statement

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

GOGLA commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

### 6.5 Prevention

To prevent incidents from occurring, GOGLA will:

- Ensure all staff and members have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.

- 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 GOGLA. This includes the way in which information about individuals in its programs is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

GOGLA staff and representatives must not:

*(Child safeguarding)*

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labor or trafficking.

*(Adult safeguarding)*

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

*(Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse)*

- Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, GOGLA staff, representatives and contractors are obliged to:

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

## 6.6 Reporting

GOGLA will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by GOGLA's Whistleblowing Policy. GOGLA will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, and official bodies.

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Executive Director. If the (staff) member does not feel comfortable reporting to the Executive Director or line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to the Board of Directors.

## 6.7 Response

GOGLA will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and according to legal and statutory obligations (see procedures in Associated Policies e.g., Whistleblowing policy).

GOGLA will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy. GOGLA 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.

All incidents of breaches of Safeguarding whether proven or not will be entered into an incident register and disclosed to appropriate stakeholders. The register will note conclusions of all cases so that it is clear what happened and what actions have been taken (if any) or why no action taken.

## 6.8 Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

## 6.9 Definitions

**Beneficiary of Assistance:** Someone who directly receives goods or services from GOGLA's program. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

**Child:** A person below the age of 18.

**Harm:** Psychological, physical 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, solitary confinement, and isolation.

*This policy was approved by the GOGLA Board of Directors on 26 May 2021.*