

## **Safeguarding Policy for Ekwendeni Women Dawa Organization (EWDO)**

### **Introduction**

Ekwendeni Women Dawa Organization (EWDO) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals, especially women, girls, and vulnerable groups, involved in our programs. We recognize our responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This policy outlines our commitment to maintaining a safe environment and the procedures for addressing any concerns.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define EWDO's approach to safeguarding, ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and partners adhere to the highest standards of conduct when working with vulnerable individuals. It aims to prevent abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and to provide a clear procedure for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all EWDO staff, volunteers, board members, consultants, and any individuals or organizations working on behalf of EWDO.

### **Key Principles**

- **Zero Tolerance:** EWDO has a zero-tolerance policy towards abuse, exploitation, and neglect.
- **Respect for Rights:** We will respect the rights, dignity, and confidentiality of all individuals.
- **Equality and Inclusion:** We are committed to ensuring that all individuals have equal access to our programs and services, free from discrimination.
- **Reporting Mechanism:** There will be a clear, confidential process for reporting any safeguarding concerns, and all reports will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

### **Safe Recruitment**

EWDO will ensure that all recruitment processes for staff and volunteers include safeguarding checks, including criminal background checks where applicable. References will be thoroughly checked, and all candidates will be informed of our safeguarding policy during the recruitment process.

### **Code of Conduct**

All staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Treat all individuals with respect, dignity, and fairness.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with participants and avoid situations that may lead to abuse or exploitation.
- Never engage in any form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.
- Never engage in or tolerate any discriminatory behavior.

- Report any safeguarding concerns or incidents immediately through the established channels.

#### Training and Awareness

All staff, volunteers, and board members will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction and on an ongoing basis. Training will cover identifying signs of abuse, understanding the reporting process, and promoting a culture of safeguarding within the organization.

#### Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Anyone within EWDO or associated with our programs who has a safeguarding concern must report it immediately. The following steps will be followed:

- Report the concern to the designated Safeguarding Officer or a senior staff member.
- All reports will be treated with confidentiality, and the safety and privacy of the individuals involved will be respected.
- The Safeguarding Officer will investigate the concern and take appropriate action, including involving external authorities when necessary.

#### Responding to Safeguarding Incidents

If a safeguarding issue arises, EWDO will take immediate and appropriate action, which may include:

- Ensuring the safety of the individual(s) involved.
- Reporting the concern to relevant authorities such as law enforcement or child protection agencies.
- Providing support to the affected individuals.
- Implementing corrective measures to prevent future incidents.

#### Monitoring and Review

EWDO will regularly review and update this policy to ensure it remains effective and relevant. Safeguarding will be a standing agenda item at our management meetings, and any incidents or concerns will be discussed and addressed promptly.

#### Commitment to Continuous Improvement

EWDO is committed to continuously improving our safeguarding practices. We will seek feedback from staff, beneficiaries, and external partners to enhance our approach and ensure that we are providing the safest environment possible for all involved in our programs.

#### **Signed**

Chief Executive Officer