

## Safeguarding Policy

The policy lays out the commitments made by Watipa, and informs members and trustees of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance in the conduct of Watipa members, staff, volunteers, trustees and interns.

Watipa believes that everyone, regardless of age, gender identity, HIV status, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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. This definition 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 Watipa programmes, events, conferences and ways of working.

Harm refers to psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights. This includes 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.

Beneficiary of Assistance refers to someone who directly receives goods or services from Watipa's programmes. 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.

At risk or vulnerable adult is a person who is or may be in need of 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 or exploitation.

**Child safeguarding:** Watipa is committed to not engaging in sexual activity with anyone under the legal age of consent in the relevant jurisdiction, sexually abuse or exploit children, subjecting any child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect, nor engaging in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

**Adult safeguarding:** Watipa is committed to not sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults or subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

**Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse:** Watipa is committed to not engaging in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Watipa is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations, and enables the timely reporting and response to any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations raised. Watipa will not tolerate abuse and exploitation of or by staff, volunteers, interns, members or trustees.

Watipa is committed to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

### Prevention

Watipa will:

- Ensure all staff, volunteers, interns, members or trustees have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and non-harassment
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that is respectful, inclusive of diversity, and protects people from any risk of harm that may arise. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

### Reporting

Watipa will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, volunteers, interns, members or trustees. Information and contact details to report a safeguarding concern will also be made available to the communities we work with through the website and information shared in programmatic activities.

Watipa will also accept, respond to and investigate where necessary complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

Any Watipa staff, volunteer, intern, member or trustee who has a safeguarding concern should report it immediately to the CEO. If person does not feel comfortable reporting it to the CEO (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 Data Controller.

### Response

Watipa will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations. Watipa will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to anyone found in breach of policy and will offer support in relation to any harm caused. Confidentiality will be observed throughout and the need for any disclosure of the details of the case will be discussed and agreed.