



# Amigos Safeguarding Statement

## **Our safeguarding promises**

The vulnerability of the people we serve places a special duty of protection on us. This vulnerability is driven by the power imbalances that sit at the heart of global poverty and injustice. To address these power imbalances, we must confront the behaviours that entrench them, and which exist across all our organisations. This includes naming and surfacing any cultures or practices that negatively impact our most vulnerable staff and partners, and the people and communities we work with. And it means putting the voices of women, children, marginalised social and economic groups, differently abled, LGBTQ and the aged first. We know that real change requires all of us to not only enhance our systems, but to work together, in partnership with local people and governments, to achieve lasting cultural change.

We have outlined below the steps that we will take to listen to survivors, communities and staff; prevent abuse from taking place; respond rapidly to all concerns; and learn from past mistakes and keep getting better.

### **We will listen to survivors, communities and staff. We will...**

- put survivors first, ensuring dedicated teams are on hand to respond to their needs, ensure their accounts are built into decision-making, and to support them for as long as they need, including preventing community backlash and reporting back on outcomes and progress
- ensure that perspectives from the Global South shape both our practices and support for survivors, and that all our systems support the individual agency of survivors and encourage their ownership of the solutions
- design all our safeguarding processes in partnership with the communities that we work in, ensuring they are sensitive to the unique needs of vulnerable children and adults across multiple different contexts
- ensure voices that can be marginalised by power imbalances – e.g. because of race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, or social and economic status – are elevated in planning and decision making, creating a diverse and inclusive organisational culture and ensuring that their needs and additional vulnerabilities are reflected in our programme work.

### **We will prevent abuse from taking place. We will...**

- root out bullying, harassment and incivility and ensure no abuse of power is tolerated, addressing the gender, race and other inequalities that drive these behaviours
- ensure all the people we serve, our staff, and the organisations we work with are aware of their safeguarding rights and obligations through mandatory and regular training and a code of conduct that is championed by senior managers and linked to performance management

- work with communities, staff and survivors to build systems that are well understood and give people the confidence to come forward and report concerns
- take any necessary action to prevent perpetrators entering our organisations, ensuring that all staff members are subject to appropriate background checks that are regularly refreshed
- develop systems and approaches that effectively detect abuse and exploitation, so we do not wait for a child, vulnerable person or a member of our own staff to report
- ensure this agenda is owned by Trustees and senior leadership – guaranteeing: staff direct access to our leadership; that behaviours and zero tolerance are modelled from the top-down; and that leaders are held accountable to strong performance on safeguarding.

**We will respond rapidly to all concerns. We will...**

- ensure robust and transparent reporting mechanisms are in place, and we will work with survivors and local communities to make these easy to use and responsive to their needs, including ensuring appropriate, accessible and independent whistleblowing procedures are available for all staff
- take swift action in response to any safeguarding breaches
- ensure that all cases involving children and any alleged crimes are reported to the appropriate authorities, where this will not expose victims to further harm
- ensure dedicated investigations teams follow up on all complaints or concerns and continue with our investigations even if a person under investigation departs our organisation; we will not always have the inhouse skills to appropriately and safely investigate some cases, so we will ensure sector-wide referral mechanisms, which deliver a collective survivor-centred response, are in place
- report any concerns directly, and in a timely manner, to donors and regulators, and publish our reporting data, so that survivors and communities are confident that their concerns will be taken seriously and so that perpetrators know they will not get away with their actions.

***Reviewed December 2023***

***Next Review December 2024***