Organisational Safeguarding Best Practices and Procedures: A Toolkit

Towards Transnational Intersectional Feminist Accountability Frameworks to Respond to Exploitation, Assault, Abuse, Harassment and Bullying

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Organisational Safeguarding Best Practices and Procedures: A Toolkit Towards Transnational Intersectional Feminist Accountability Frameworks to Respond to Exploitation, Assault, Abuse, Harassment and Bullying

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In the first phase of this process, WILPF assessed its partner organisations' practical and technical needs with regards to safeguarding systems. Based on the needs identified in this assessment, CTDC then conducted comprehensive field research and held a number of training workshops on accountability and safeguarding. These workshops were conducted with WILPF's and CTDC's partner organisations from various regions, including Syria and other Arabic-speaking countries. This toolkit has also benefited from conversations, consultations, and years of experience that both includes and goes beyond the context of formal research. With this in mind, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the organisations that have formally participated in the discussions and work that yielded this toolkit, especially Release me, Syrian Female Journalists Network (SFJN), Dawlaty, The Syria Campaign, Badael, Syria Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression and Syrian Women's Network.

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List of Acronyms

4Ps	Framework for Countering Human Trafficking: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership
CARA	Communities Against Rape and Abuse
CRMs	Complaint Response Mechanisms
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTDC	Centre for Transnational Development and Cooperation
HR	Human Resources
OSS	Organisational Safeguarding Systems
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SOPs	Standard operational Procedures
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

1 Introduction to the Toolkit

Through this partnership, CTDC and WILPF produced this toolkit in an attempt to respond to organisational needs expressed by WILPF's partners, through a needs-assessment survey that was conducted in 2019. At the time of the survey, many partners identified an increase in rates of harassment and bullying both within their organisations and in the field and pointed to a need for a safeguarding document that would help them address and respond to these cases. Thus, this publication provides feminist conceptual frameworks and practical tools that can help in responding to incidents of exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying. Moreover, if developed and actively applied at the organisational level, the safeguarding frameworks contained herein could also minimise the occurrence of such incidents.

This toolkit aims to provide a resource for organisations that want to develop frameworks for the protection of their staff and stakeholders (which includes the communities in which they work) from exploitation, assault, harassment, bullying, and other abusive practices that include sexual, physical, verbal, and implicit abuse and discrimination. We will shed light on the tools, practices, procedures, relationalities, and emotions involved in responding to violations resulting in harm that can occur in organisational contexts. We will also shed light on how to address such occurrences. Due to our belief that individuals are change-makers and that the personal is political, many of the topics discussed apply to intimate and daily feminist practices. This toolkit has been developed through a long research process wherein safeguarding strategies were tested through individual and collective consultations, training modules, and other workshops that were carried out with various organisations and initiatives. In addition to that, the accountability frameworks discussed in this text were designed to accommodate the policies and procedures of many different organisations, a process in which more than two hundred individuals have participated over the past two years.

When engaging with this toolkit, it is important to remember that the process of building comprehensive accountability and safeguarding systems should be constantly under development. The need for these systems and the form they take will differ according to the type, size, and legal status of the organisation, initiative, or movement in question. We have sought to present best practices and fundamental conceptual and technical principles, but nevertheless we realise that this work requires substantial financial and human resources from organisations, initiatives, and groups. Thus, we suggest that the process of developing policies and procedures be treated as a long-term commitment that will never yield a final or complete product. We recommend that these policies and procedures be developed in stages and in the form of simple steps. For this reason, it is crucially important when building accountability and safeguarding systems that they be adapted to different contexts and workplaces. Consideration must be given to political, economic, and social factors, as well as to the natural, legal, technological, and relational environment for which they are being created.

The main objectives of the toolkit can be summarised as follows:

- Providing an intersectional, transnational feminist resource for thinking about safeguarding from a holistic perspective that not only focuses on individual responsibility, but also considers collective and individual accountability to be indispensable aspects of any strategy that seeks to address violence and abusive practices and all their forms.
- Providing a resource for organisations, initiatives, and groups that are interested in developing their administrative frameworks for addressing abusive practices.
- Providing an alternative conceptual framework that departs from the concepts commonly used in safeguarding frameworks.
- Providing a resource for organisations, initiatives, and groups that are interested in deconstructing existing definitions of abusive practices and calling them by their names.
- Providing organisations and initiatives with tools to help them gain an in-depth understanding of different abusive practices and the types of power that must be addressed.

- Providing conceptual frameworks and technical tools for organisations, initiatives, and groups concerned with comprehensive accountability frameworks at the governance level.
- Providing technical tools for organisations and initiatives to help them build and implement mechanisms for responding to complaints, dealing with investigations, and developing regulations for corrective action.
- Providing alternative, community-based models for responding to abusive practices that take place within organisations and initiatives, with the aim of bridging gaps in access to the rule of law.

Target audience:

- Workers in civil society organisations (CSOs). This includes all personnel, including permanent and contractual employees, consultants, volunteers, and members of the board of directors.
- Those interested in topics related to safeguarding.
- Those who have been subjected to abuse.
- Organisations and initiatives interested in developing their own accountability frameworks.
- Social and political movements concerned with addressing abuse.
- Feminist groups, organisations, and initiatives wishing to develop their management and safeguarding methods.
- Organisations, initiatives, and groups interested in mainstreaming gender in their work.

It is important to note that while this toolkit combines alternative frameworks for safeguarding with what is considered best practices in prevailing frameworks, the terminology and methods offered herein may differ from legal terminology used in the countries in which organisations operate. We advise registered organisations to contrast the language used here with that used in the laws of their relevant countries, especially the laws that relate to labour rights and to the abusive practices classified as felonies.

Important note: when reading and using this document, it must be approached in a holistic manner, as all its parts are interrelated. In many cases it is not possible to implement one part of the toolkit without taking other parts into consideration. For example, risk-assessment procedures and the concepts of power and affect must be considered while working with sections related to accountability frameworks and building Complaint Response Mechanisms (CRMs).

Note on Terminology:

In this toolkit, originally written in Arabic, we sought to choose terms that emanate from and are related to Arabic dialects spoken in the region. Using a socio-linguistic methodology, we tried to avoid transplant terms from other languages. In certain cases, we used translation in order to choose terms that reflect the meaning of foreign concepts while making them more relevant to local contexts. To describe the types of abuse that may occur in both organisations and in our daily lives and practices, we decided to use the term "abusive practices," which describes all types of violations in organisational safeguarding systems (OSSs). For example, we consider exploitation, assault, harassment, bullying, discrimination, and poor management to be abusive practices. We have chosen the word *mumārasāt* "practices" – instead of *sulūkiyyāt* "behaviours" – because it reflects the systematic nature of these behaviours and does not treat them like isolated problems that are separate from society. It also reflects their entrenchment in the oppressive structures that are at work in all of our lives. In addition, in the Arabic text we used two versions of the word harassment interchangeably and depending on the context; *taḥarrush* and *muḍāyaqat*. Usage of the two words varies regionally, but taken together they refer to a group of actions that includes all forms of harassment; bothering, hassling, and generally making problems for people; and micro-aggressions and annoyances. The same is true for the word bullying – *istiqwā'* "overpowering" and the still foreign-sounding tanammur. We consider all of the practices discussed herein to be damaging and/or harmful, regardless of their direct effect.

Moreover, we found differences between the two words *ḍarar* "damage" and *'aḏā* "harm." The latter is usually used in both Arabic and English to describe the negative effects of abusive practices, specifically on living things, while the former speaks to the negative effect of abusive practices on both living and material things. We have used both words throughout to include in the definitions of abusive practices those types of harm that target material things such as houses, cars, buildings, or offices. These practices do not necessarily directly target people, but they do have the potential to cause mental and emotional harm. For example, some forms of bullying are aimed at sabotaging property, which may cause material

damage and psychological harm, but not necessarily physical harm. We also found differences in the use of these terms in the English language, as ḍarar is usually translated by the word damage, which is often limited in English to the negative impact that is caused to material things such as a house, car, building, or office. The word *ʻaḍā*, meanwhile, is translated as harm, which, like in the Arabic, includes all manner of negative effects that are caused by malpractices, including physical and moral impact.

Importantly, we use the concept of affect in this toolkit to understand the consequences of abusive practices and how they affect each of us in different ways. This choice is in line with feminist thought in the fields of philosophy, psychology, political sociology, and the sociology of emotions. We consider the tracing of affect to be an important methodological lens when dealing with those who have been subjected to abusive practices. From a feminist perspective, affect tracing is valuable because it recognises and provides space to account for the agency of the victim when responding to cases of abuse. We consider this to be of utmost importance, as many of those who have come forward about being subjected to abusive practices shared that their narratives were called into question because of inadequate attention to the specificity of affect; the listener or person receiving the complaint saw the situation from their own perspective, measuring the effect of the situation on themselves without fully considering the complainant's affective experiences.

Lastly, in the original Arabic text we use the word *iṣlāḥiyya* for "restorative and transformative" justice because it is closest linguistically to the form of justice to which we are referring in this tool. Within the framework of restorative and transformative justice: (1) punishing aggressors is not sufficient; (2) affect tracing in the experiences of survivors and focusing on their needs is required; (3) rethinking all of the systems and structures that allow these abusive practices to occur is a part of the process; (4) generating innovative solutions to address such practices is the goal. This is how we define this form of justice according to our perspective. Our choice of the phrase *al-ʾadāla al-iṣlāḥiyya* "restorative justice" instead of *al-ʾadāla al-taḥwiliyya* "transformative justice" is purely linguistic. The former is more native and natural to Arabic than the odd-sounding alternative.

2 Conceptual Framework

2.1 Prevailing Frameworks: Gaps

In order to develop the conceptual framework for this toolkit, we reviewed a vast array of literature from various disciplines, including texts related to best procedures and practices that were produced by international organisations. These include the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) framework and the 4Ps framework,[1] which was developed to respond to cases of human trafficking, as well as a wealth of literature about community responses to community and intimate violence. Through our research, and as described below in the methodology section, we (1) tested the efficacy and viability of these frameworks on the ground, (2) identified gaps in both knowledge and procedural application, and (3) tested their adaptability to different contexts. Based on our study of the literature, the practical research that we have done during the past six months, and our previous work in the field, we have found the following gaps and problems in prevailing frameworks of traditional safeguarding policies:

- **Problems with Terms and Definitions:**
  Most available definitions of abusive practices fall into the categories of exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, and bullying, which are translated from English for Arabic-language contexts. These definitions often cause confusion about which of these practices are acceptable and which are completely unacceptable. At times, they also tend to describe an abusive practice or action with words that do not reflect the context in which the event took place. For example, we found

1. The 4Ps framework is an evolution of the 3Ps framework which was agreed upon by a group of governments and humanitarian organisations in order to address human trafficking and slavery. The "four Ps" – policy, procedure, plan, and practice – are based on principles of prevention, safeguarding, accountability, prosecution, and partnership.

that in Arabic-speaking countries, most abusive practices are called taḥarrush “harassment,” as this word is used to describe both sexual and non-sexual harassment, as well as practices that could be classified as bullying. For this reason, in order to build this toolkit, we conducted group and individual sessions to deconstruct and re-develop certain terms and concepts in the Arabic language, using a self-reflexive methodology that builds on personal experiences and addresses abusive practices within the context of Arabic-speaking countries and organisations. One example of these terminology problems is when news circulated that the director of an organisation in Lebanon was “a harasser.” After the board of directors took measures and investigated the matter, however, it found that he was not guilty of sexual harassment. According to the common terms and definitions in the field, most of the practices that survivors described as harassment should have been classified as bullying (more in Chapter 4, “Terms and Definitions”).

- **The Myth of Prevention:**
  Our research shows that most international organisations and funding agencies operating in the Arabic-speaking region foster the notion that abusive practices within organisations are preventable. Accordingly, they project their expectations and experiences onto local organisations, and if and when these practices occur, said organisation and its employees are treated as though they are condemned to failure. We have found that, the discourse of prevention constitutes a major obstacle for organisations wanting to address practices of exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment. Most organisations feel helpless when confronted with these situations, as though they have already failed. Instead of taking corrective action, organisations often resort to covering up the issue and its ensuing turmoil, choosing not to share their experiences or ask for help. When we pay attention to the myth of preventability, we also begin to see how and why these cases are often dealt with as though they are isolated events and not systematic

oppressive practices. It is important to remember that organisations are inseparable from society, and that abusive practices are not isolated cases. Rather, they are reflections of our societies. It is also important to remember that all actions taken within safeguarding frameworks are attempts and experiments. If it was possible to find a perfect preventative solution, we would have no need to continue developing mechanisms to confront exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment at the global level.

- **Re-Stigmatising Sex Work:**
  Another important gap in available definitions of exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment is the way in which they seem to consider all types of sex work to be abusive and exploitative. No distinction is made between sex work, human trafficking, and sexual slavery. The ideas that emerge from this conservative, sex-negative standpoint, do not take the sex worker's agency into account, nor do they allow for the practice of consent and agreement, thus further Promoting Conservative Values: Most of the policies put forward in the existing literature prohibit and stigmatise sexual and intimate relationships between members of a single community, such as between personnel or beneficiaries of a given organisation. This prohibition applies regardless of the presence of consent, agreement, and desire on behalf of both parties. As such, these policies increase social stigma on intimate relationships, and further legitimise those laws, customs, and practices that exercise control over the bodies and relationships of community members. In fostering a conservative culture, these policies also lead to practices that may increase the likelihood of sexual exploitation, assault, and harassment, rather than preventing them. For example, some women may be forced to hide their intimate relationships out of fear created by these limitations, prohibitions, and stigmas. Thus, they become more isolated and vulnerable to certain violations that are difficult to report. For instance, even if a woman is in a relationship in which there is an element of consent and desire on behalf of both parties, she will not be able to make a report if the other person abuses, exploits, or sexually or physically assaults her.

- **Misunderstanding Cultural Sensitivity:**
  Throughout our research, it became clear that multiple problems exist regarding the concept of cultural sensitivity and its application in safeguarding contexts. Although international organisations claim that their safeguarding systems are culturally sensitive, we have found that they are usually built according to these organisations' experiences, and that they induce local organisations to apply them following a top-down approach. While this reflects a lack of sensitivity to context, the term "cultural sensitivity" is problematically deployed. For example, some organisations refuse to address topics related to confronting abusive practices – especially those of a sexual nature – or to create safeguarding systems under the pretext of cultural sensitivity. Thus, organisations avoid speaking about these subjects, operating according to the assumption that society is culturally conservative and needs nothing more than policies that regulate its behaviours. By so doing, they fail to address the root of the problem. In other instances, we found that abusive and oppressive practices such as gender-based discrimination were being justified under the umbrella of cultural sensitivity. In such cases, the concept of cultural sensitivity is an obstacle to addressing exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, bullying, and other abusive practices. We also found that in many cases when abuse was reported, international workers would excuse it on the basis of cultural difference. Furthermore, the term itself is flawed, as it implies cultural exceptionalism and generates stigmas and stereotypes about entire societies. In reality, what we see on the ground is that individual societies contain cultural diversity, and that cultural differences can and do exist between individuals in the same organisation, just as they do between residents of the same neighbourhood or members of the same family. We find that the kind of sensitivity that is needed to create effective safeguarding systems in organisations is not cultural, but structural sensitivity. This alternative to cultural sensitivity focuses on structures of oppression that determine our positionalities according to our differences, rather than generalising our experiences according to a single, imaginary cultural framework. Structural

sensitivity allows us to respond to abusive practices from an intersectional perspective that takes our individual differences into account.

- **Stereotyping Survivors:**
  Most existing policies stress the importance of centring the best-interests of survivors when responding to cases of exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment. To a large extent, however, they also recommend stereotyped responses and have specific standards for survivors, which ignore that we are all different and that abusive practices affect each of us differently. Consequently, these policies are framed in such a way that they treat experiences as though they can be essentialised. Likewise, they do not take the concept of affect and affective influence into account, which must be the primary criteria for understanding the event and the needs of everyone involved. For example, the same word may have a different impact on each of us. Therefore, the person who determines whether or not a word is acceptable must be the person who receives the word. This does not mean that we do not call abusive practices by their names regardless of the effect. Rather, it means that we must refrain from stereotyping survivors and standardising their needs, and that we must acknowledge survivors' agency and ability to self-determine.

- **Narrow-Mindedness:**
  Policies and literature that deal with responses to exploitation, abuse, harassment, and bullying usually focus on vulnerabilities based on gender, failing to consider other differences such as economic, social, and political class; physical, mental, emotional, and sexual faculties. Lacking an intersectional perspective, this view reproduces binary oppositions between victim and aggressor, which are usually portrayed as a woman and a man respectively, suggesting that women are incapable of engaging in abusive practices or causing harm. In addition to this narrow focus on sex and gender, some safeguarding systems are formulated to focus only on abusive practices of a sexual nature. Such systems neglect other practices that may have a similar impact on survivors, creating major oversights and obstacles that impair an organisation's ability to provide protection for all.

- **Inapplicability to Different Contexts:**

  Traditional safeguarding frameworks usually focus on techniques and procedures that are difficult to adapt different contexts. Each context is shaped by different social, economic, political, and security factors. The same is true of our experiences, relationships, and emotions, which are generated as we are exposed and respond to abusive practices, all according to their relative intensity and effect on us as individuals. Existing techniques and procedures usually presume state systems that can punish or address these practices, but actual experiences with formal rule of law institutions in Arabic-speaking countries indicates the opposite. A great number of organisations operate at a regional, international and/or transnational level. This is true of most Syrian organisations, for example. It is also true that, for many organisations, the involvement of state institutions is violence in and of itself. Consider Palestinian organisations that operate in the context of settler colonialism, for instance. Many places routinely criminalise survivors and are characterised by widespread oppressive practices towards marginalised groups such as refugees, non-normative individuals,[2] and immigrants. In countries that are characterised by oppressive and abusive practices towards their own residents, be they citizens, immigrants, or refugees, it can be difficult or ill-advised to resort to legal systems. Thus, we have to search for alternative, community-based and organisational ways of responding to abuse. Furthermore, in some countries, many refugees work informally because the host country does not allow them to engage in income-generating work. Therefore, it is important to build safeguarding systems inclusive of those who are excluded from formal systems for making a living.

2. We define non-normative individuals as those who do not align with patriarchal and heteronormative gender roles and sexual norms. This includes but is not limited to those who identify as LGBTQ.

- **Emphasis on Punishment:**

  Traditional safeguarding frameworks are built around an excessive focus on punishing the perpetrator. Blame for the occurrence of a violation is usually attributed to a single individual, i.e. the direct perpetrator, and no attention is paid to the chain of accountability that includes anyone who could have prevented the incident. Even in incidents of abuse, the personal should be considered both political and professional (Scheepers & Lakhani, 2020). Therefore, we must not only think about the responsibility that falls on individuals, but also about that which falls on oppressive systems. This focus on punishment and punitive justice creates obstacles for those organisations and initiatives that do not enjoy adequate protection under the law, and it undermines their ability to respond to such abusive practices. For example, Syrian organisations and initiatives face legal obstacles that prevent them even from imposing penalties on perpetrators. Furthermore, an array of literature has shown that punishing one person (considered the direct perpetrator) does not prevent the recurrence of these practices nor does it contribute to overall societal change. Therefore, our responses to such practices must adopt principles of feminist accountability that emphasise restorative and transformative justice on a societal level. Such an approach considers each and every one of us responsible for these incidents to varying degrees and considers such occurrences as a mere reflection of societies formed by us as individual people. At the level of organisations, movements, and initiatives, this means that we have to institute accountability frameworks at every level, from decision-making to finances, without neglecting any element of organisational development. This includes the organisation's culture of behavioural and ethical standards, which are subject to various and disparate practices and understandings.

- **Failing to Safeguard Organisations and Their Personnel:**

  Traditional safeguarding frameworks focus on protecting groups that are in subordinate positions within certain hierarchies of power. In our research, however, we noticed that organisations themselves, as well as their individual staff members, are in urgent need of safeguarding systems. For example, an entire organisation may be vulnerable to legal prosecution if a perpetrator decides to accuse it of defamation. This is due to the sensitive nature of the subject, and the difficulty of obtaining concrete evidence that a violation has occurred. Unfortunately, it is especially true if the organisation is committed to protecting the privacy and anonymity of survivors. Organisations can become legally liable if they decide to arbitrarily fire an employee because of their abusive practices. In addition, by focusing on protecting the beneficiaries only, traditional safeguarding systems overlook that an organisation's personnel may need protection as well. They also assume that workers in organisations are not from the same community that they serve. For instance, if someone is exposed within a given organisation to be a perpetrator of harassment or exploitation, other workers from that organisation may then experience bullying by the surrounding community. Traditional safeguarding policies do not provide any procedures or advice to aid in dealing with such occurrences.

These are significant conceptual gaps within traditional safeguarding frameworks, which seek to protect against exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment but overlook the fairly common practice of bullying. We have seen a need for an alternative safeguarding framework that views protection through the lens of intersectional feminism and the principles of feminist governance and accountability. These principles are geared towards restorative and societal justice, and they centre survivors through the concept of affect.

2.2 Alternative Conceptual Framework

Having identified prevailing issues in traditional safe-guarding frameworks used by organisations, examined the challenges of their application, and researched alternative literatures, we built this toolkit around six conceptual axes: (1) relationality, (2) feminist governance and power-sharing, (3) feminist accountability, (4) restorative justice, (5) the concept of affect, and (6) agency and Intrinsic power. These axes served as fundamental principles, guiding the formulation of the tools and practical advice contained in this toolkit. We have also drawn upon multi- and inter-disciplinary literature from the fields of sociology, organisational and social psychology, anthropology, moral philosophy, feminist philosophy, managerial and organisational sciences, finance, linguistics, sociolinguistics, education sciences, and ecology. We also found a rich source of alternative, restorative methods for dealing with societal violence in the body of literature written by feminist women of colour and black feminist theorists. For example, in the book The Revolution Starts at Home, which is based on the experiences of the members of CARA (Communities Against Rape and Abuse), we found advice and guidelines for dealing with abuse in cases of sexual violence. In education sciences we found important resources for dealing with bullying in schools. Throughout, we have tried to integrate best practices from administrative, organisational, and financial sciences with the principles of feminist philosophy. In this section, we provide our conceptualisation of these principles, to which we arrived in consultation with the literature, through in-depth research, and by way of more than thirty years of collective experience in the field. Hoping to discuss in a separate publication the logical framework through which we reached these axes, we briefly outline them below.

2.2.1 Relationality

The conceptual approach of relationality emphasises the fact that society is composed of a network of social relations. The ways in which these relations are formed can be called social processes. There can be no society

without social processes between us as individuals, which in turn form society in the broadest sense. Accordingly, all systems of accountability and safeguarding in organisations, initiatives, or political movements must take relationality into account. This lens encourages organisations to build their own protection and accountability policies based on the relationships that make up their surrounding environment, which includes relationships with and between personnel, beneficiaries, stakeholders, the broader community, the state, etc. Organisational accountability frameworks must include clear procedures that specify the nature and limits of the relationships and roles contained within and reaching beyond the organisation, as well as the responsibilities that are entailed in these relationships. In order to create the societal change that we seek, we must care for and nurture these relationships. For these reasons, the use of relationality as an analytical methodology for formulating OSSs has been central to the development of this toolkit (for more, see section 6.2 Relationships: Analysis and Management). In the words of Cynthia Kaufman: "If we ask ourselves the most simple questions, such as where do we get our food from, we can see that we are tied up in networks of relationships with millions of other people. Our actions are constantly creating, recreating, challenging and transforming the networks of relationships that make up the fabric of our shared world. We influence the fabric of society by the choices we make about whose actions we choose to acknowledge and whose we choose to ignore; by where we take a stand, and where we choose not to; by how we treat others and how we expect to be treated."

2.2.2 Feminist Governance and Power-Sharing

We define governance as the decision-making process that is related to clarifying expectations, systems, and management of an organisation and its activities, as well as its current and future strategies. Governance mechanisms permeate all of the basic elements of organisational development, from the organisation's atmosphere and culture to its strategies. We can also think of governance as the ethics, fundamental values, and mode of leadership (management)

followed in the administration of organisations, companies, political movements, etc. We define feminist governance as a set of ethics, practices, and attitudes that those in positions of authority can adopt in order to share their power, and/or as the optimal way to use power, hierarchies, and authority. Feminist governance represents a means for sharing power and an attempt to distribute it fairly, which is a fundamental goal of the feminist movement. In order to build organisations capable of pursuing justice we must, to the greatest extent possible, ensure justice within them. In the article, "Caution! Feminists at work: building organisations from the inside out," Ella Scheepers and Ishtar Lakhani argue that in order for our organisations to be effective in the context of demands, financing agendas, and surrounding circumstances that are constantly shifting, we must build concepts of justice into the way that we lead our organisations. This is not possible without working to lessen the severity of the hierarchies and differences in power that exist between us. Likewise, we cannot challenge the impunity of people who practise abusive or violent behaviour without removing the impunity that is created through oppressive hierarchies. This does not mean abandoning hierarchies altogether, as hierarchies serve an administrative purpose and allow for clear courses of action. Indeed, the concept of working without hierarchies is a myth. Hierarchies as such are not going anywhere, but we can change the way that we use them. Lessening the severity of hierarchies involves working to undermine the impunity that they can generate. Building on the concept of feminist governance, we have tried in this toolkit to introduce tools and procedures that could limit the emergence of this type of impunity. We offer these suggestions as part of the accountability frameworks that we have found most effective for responding to exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, and other abusive practices. Organisations that adopt corporate management practices create environments that are conducive to such harmful practices. Values of governance derived from the private sector are incompatible with principles of civil society organisations that seek social justice for all.

2.2.3 Feminist Accountability

This toolkit is based on the premise that in order to create better safeguarding policies, accountability frameworks must be available at every level of a given organisation or initiative. This includes governance, hiring, pay scale, policy setting, and fiscal controls. We define feminist accountability as a continuous and changing process with no clear beginning or end; a process related in one way or another to relationships, affect, power, positionality, and a vision of justice that seeks to create change in society as a whole. Rather than dealing with problems as isolated incidents, feminist accountability sees the problems we face as symptoms of deeper societal, political, and economic issues. Furthermore, we view accountability as a personal resource through which individuals can acknowledge harm they have done to themselves or others. This is a departure from the model of accountability wherein it is something that happens suddenly to bad people. Here, accountability is not a one-time trial or meting out of consequences, but an ongoing process within an organisation. To this end, we have learned from some of the experiences discussed in The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Partner Abuse in Activist Communities, and from Ann Russo, who explains in her book Feminist Accountability: Disrupting Violence and Transforming Power: “This approach to accountability disrupts the dominant carceral logic that reserves punitive and shaming responses for groups of people designated as the ‘bad people’ while offering everyone else immunity from any responsibility for wrongdoing. Instead, it calls for the recognition that all of us are capable of harm and complicity in systemic oppression, and so we all could practice taking accountability for our involvement in the perpetuation of oppression and violence.”

In actuality, abusive practices such as exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, and bullying are common reflections of our societies, and should not be dealt with as though they are isolated cases. This viewpoint is in line with transnational feminist praxis that requires us to be aware of our positionalities and how we affect the lives of others worldwide. Insofar as we have responsibility for abusive societal practices, we

must practice accountability accordingly. In this vein, Arlie Hochschild provides a wonderful illustration of the global care chain. In Hochschild's example, an older daughter from a poor family is required to take care of her younger sibling while their mother works as a nanny, caring for the children of a woman who has migrated. The migrant woman is a domestic worker in an economically richer country, where she cares for the children of a working woman from the rich country. We can apply the logic of this care chain to many aspects of our lives, as it clarifies the nature of the interconnectedness and interdependence that transcends borders and exists not only between us all as people, but also between interlocking systems of oppression. Throughout this toolkit, we have used the concept of feminist accountability in order to speak to alternative modes of justice that do not revolve around punishment and accountability only when mistakes are made, but rather seek to make accountability a daily organisational practice.

2.2.4 Restorative and Transformative Justice

In order to work with the concept of feminist accountability, we must also work with that of restorative justice. In our review of Arabic-language literature, we have found a great deal of confusion between the terms restorative justice, transformative justice, transitional justice, and corrective justice is very common. This is due to the fact that these terms are translated from English in various forms. For example, some translate the term restorative justice as *taṣāluhiyya* "reconciliatory" justice, which has nothing to do with restorative justice. Whereas the latter is concerned with redressing harm done to victims and seeking to transform systems in order to ensure that the violation does not happen again; the former, reconciliatory justice, focuses on re-establishing friendly relations between the two parties of a conflict. We also found that, in much of the literature, the terms "transformative" justice and "restorative" justice are used interchangeably. However, despite the presence of very simple differences between transformative and restorative justice, the principles of the two models do

not conflict. On the contrary, they complement one another. Our choice to use the Arabic term *iṣlāḥiyya* is based on the fact that *iṣlāḥ* "reform" is truer to the Arabic language than taḥwīl, a common but strange sounding translation of "transform." This choice was purely linguistic and in no way detracts from the principles of transformative justice. In this toolkit, we define restorative justice as a process that strives to restore dignity and respect to survivors of violence and abusive practices in all their forms, and to redress the harm that has been done to them. This can be achieved through a multi-pronged approach that focuses on the following: understanding affect and the effects of abuse on an emotional level, not just at the level of basic material needs; making the accountability process self-reflexive; practising structural sensitivity; and transforming oppressive structures and changing society.

This approach offers us an alternative to focusing only on punishing individuals, which acts as a form of scapegoating, and overlooks collective responsibility for reducing violence, confronting injustice and oppression, and transforming entire systems from the roots up. This does not mean ignoring individual responsibility for harm. Rather, it means continuing to think beyond moments of punishment and consequences as we move towards the goal of changing societal structures. At the organisational level, punishing the perpetrator and providing the survivor with material assistance is not enough. Responding to exploitation, assault, and sexual harassment requires that we rethink the entire governance and management systems at all organisational levels. This requires that we come up with innovative solutions as we ask ourselves how we could have prevented these practices. These principles represent a mixture between the values of restorative and transformative justice. In this model, we must think alongside survivors about types of remediation that differ from one person to another, just as the effect of abusive practices differs from one person to another. As we avoid generalising and stereotyping survivor experiences, we must also avoid thinking that any services we offer to survivors can come in one-size-fits-all. This form of justice also requires us to practice structural sensitivity, which

means acknowledging our different positionalities within oppressive structures, ceasing to claim that essential differences exist between cultures, and challenging the myth of cultural exceptionalism. For example, being structurally sensitive means becoming aware that we are all exposed to political, social, economic, environmental, technological, legal, and relational systems that manifest themselves differently according to where we are positioned in society. Adopting a restorative justice approach also allows us to reduce our dependence on state systems as arbiters of justice. Instead, it sets its sights on collective societal wellbeing and change by way of caring for relationalities, adopting the concepts of feminist accountability and structural sensitivity, and focusing on affect.

2.2.5 Affect

Academic literature on feminist philosophy and psychology, political sociology, and the sociology of emotions has dealt extensively with the concept of affect. This concept has not been translated into practices of safeguarding from exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment, however. We found it beneficial for several reasons to use affect as a fundamental conceptual axis when crafting this toolkit, and to refer to affective influence as the combined affects and effects of abusive practices. First of all, although many policy-shapers have spoken to the importance of centring the victim in traditional safeguarding systems (especially those relating to exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment), they have often continued to operate on the assumption that survivors and those affected by abusive practices have specific and uniform material needs. Even when survivors are centred, they often continue to face stereotypes about the characteristics of survivors, and are dealt with as though their cases are isolated and individual. Little attention is paid to the fact that we as individuals are affected by abusive practices in different ways and to varying degrees, and that the nature of our needs will also be different. The tracing of affect includes addressing harm and damage

caused by abusive practices. Secondly, the concept of affect can help us in practising accountability. When we understand our affective relationship with society, we are able to self-reflect and recognise the privileges and power that we possess, insofar as they change according to context and are affected by time and space. This can be applied at the organisational level, as understanding affect is an essential part of the accountability frameworks needed to create environments that do not condone abusive practices. Lastly, because the world around us is made up of networks of relationships, understanding how we affect others is essential for us to build relationships that align with a feminist politics of care. As Rianne Mahon and Fiona Robinson put it, a feminist politics of care address "the wider structural and normative reasons – as found in the global political economy and in social constructions." Principally, feminist care depends on treating care as an ethical value that takes shape in relationships and social processes, as well as through our individual political positions and societal affects. Care as an ethical value requires us to practise several levels of awareness at once: awareness of our own and others' positionalities; sensitivity to different systems of oppression; attention to our connectedness with others through reciprocal relationships; and the practice of emotional responsibility. Thus, care is a practice and voluntary virtue that differs from care roles that are imposed on individuals by oppressive structures. Although we have incorporated it into this toolkit, we continue to feel the need to look into affect more deeply as it relates to safeguarding frameworks. Further research may enable us to go further in imagining and applying response systems that more effectively and affectively account for our complex experiences.

2.2.6 Agency and Intimate Power

We found that traditional policies and general safeguarding frameworks do not contain systematic methods for thinking about power and agency. Such methods should be based on the notion that each of us has agency and the ability to make decisions regardless

of our position in hierarchies of power. They should also conceive of socio-political influence such that it is not considered the sole purview of state penal systems, those occupying positions of power and authority, or the political, social, and cultural elite. Accordingly, we must respond to cases of exploitation, assault, and sexual harassment without further victimising survivors by denying their agency. We must also account for intrinsic and intimate power, as well as emotional authority, when dealing with abusive practices. The emotional power of survivors or perpetrators is rarely addressed when investigating cases of exploitation that rely on hierarchies of power. To this end, this toolkit suggests guidelines for how to promote a survivor's right to self-determination and avoid undermining their agency or acting on their behalf without their consent. Understanding agency helps us to regard survivors as active and informed decision-makers who know more about their situations than we—the experts—do. Contained herein as well are tools to help us all realise our influence and potential to enact change, regardless of the positions we occupy in hierarchies of power. This notion of agency aligns with the concepts of feminist accountability, effect, and relationality.

In order to define the above axes that formed the conceptual framework for the practical tools presented in this document, we depended on participatory research that took place over six months, and which we consider to be ongoing. We view all feminist work as work that is continuously evolving, under construction, and subject to change, and this toolkit is no exception. In the next chapter, we will review the methodology through which we built this toolkit and developed the alternative conceptual framework for organisational safeguarding.

3 Methodology

The need for more work on safeguarding from exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying was felt during a collaborative and participatory research process, for WILPF's project feminist movement for change in Syria. Through this process WILPF identified this need based on its partner organisations needs assessment consultations. In response to these needs, WILPF began putting resources into developing safeguarding tools. In 2019, WILPF consulted with CTDC, which then provided training and guidance on CRMs related to harassment and bullying to WILPF's partners. Thus, began the participatory research process through which this toolkit was developed. In these trainings and mentorship programs, we discovered a need to build further knowledge about safeguarding systems, especially after finding that available frameworks are difficult to apply to Syrian CSOs. This is due to the unusual working conditions in Syria; a lack of structural sensitivity to Arabic-speaking countries; and the fact that technical tools are inadequate for responding to abusive practices.

In 2020, WILPF published a call for proposals for developing a safeguarding toolkit to meet the needs of Syrian CSOs, particularly addressing the challenges that these organisations face when it comes to implementing and developing systems for safeguarding against exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying. In response, CTDC submitted a proposal to develop a practical toolkit using a participatory methodology. After evaluating all of the submissions, WILPF selected CTDC's proposal because it fits the needs of its partner organisations, uses an intersectional feminist approach that provides frameworks for both prevention and response to organisations' need for safeguarding. WILPF also commissioned CTDC so that they would continue the work that had been taking place since 2018 and 2020 during feminist trainings and talks that CTDC presented to WILPF's partner organisations. After being contracted to build this toolkit, we developed a comprehensive

methodology to research the main challenges facing the application of traditional safeguarding frameworks, and to deconstruct existing terminology for the abusive practices that are prevalent in CSOs and grassroots initiatives. Then, in consultation with colleagues at WILPF, we conducted extensive research between October 2020 and March 2021. These six months constituted the formal research period for the development of this toolkit, but the material it contains is an accumulation of knowledge that stems from many sources, some of which are summarised in what follows.

CTDC used an intersectional feminist perspective in order to prepare the research methodology and framework for this toolkit. Such a lens allows us to understand the intersection of systems of oppression and the different ways in which they manifest and are experienced. We tried to identify experiential differences and obstacles that prevent appropriate responses to abusive practices within organisations, such as geographical location; economic, cultural, and political class; physical and mental abilities; as well as age, gender, sex, marital status, religion, doctrine, faith, colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship status, and immigration status. We can add another significant factor that had been previously overlooked: the type and appearance of a person's clothing. From this intersectional perspective, we relied on a relational methodology to understand the social, political, and legal dynamics that obstruct organisations from developing safeguarding systems and other means of addressing exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful and damaging abusive practices. This methodology provided us with crucial knowledge and insight into the social processes involved in OSSs. Like the rest of society, organisations depend on a network of external and internal relations that are formed, develop, and run their course through social processes. Society as a whole cannot exist without the social processes that exist between individuals. Therefore, in order for an organisation to develop safeguarding mechanisms, it must understand the nature of its work through the relationalities and social processes involved in it, both at the internal and external levels. In this sense, it was important to scrutinise organisations' relationships with state systems, as well as their relationships with partner organisations, financing agencies, employees,

beneficiaries, and all stakeholders that constitute an integral part of its network of relationships and social processes. From this perspective, we can think of our knowledge as the product of networks of relationships and social processes, as well as of the many discussions we took part in about safeguarding from exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying.

We also sought to use feminist pedagogy that would allow us to involve research participants as knowledge makers and not as informants or a research sample. Inspired by the work, daily experiences, and relationships of our partners on the ground, we used our formal research to reach conclusions and deconstruct concepts in a participatory manner. For example, we asked questions in the form of difficult scenarios or ethical dilemmas that emerge around OSSs, and we named and called abusive practices such as exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying by their name. We also asked questions about diverging understandings of the words exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying. This pedagogy allowed us to turn research interviews into consulting sessions and a participatory, mutual knowledge production process with shared benefit.

3.1 Policy Assessments

CTDC developed a tool for assessing the safeguarding systems of WILPF's partner organisations and initiatives that was published in Arabic via the KoboToolBox platform. The assessment tool contained several questions about the organisation in general and its safeguarding systems in particular, as well as options for uploading the organisation's existing policies. Eighteen Syrian organisations and initiatives working in various geographical locations filled out the assessment form. Some were operating in countries neighbouring Syria or from within Syria, while others were located in the Global North. The organisations also varied in size, from more than one hundred employees to less than ten people, with only two having safeguarding policies against exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying. After a preliminary analysis of the data gathered in the assessment tool, we analysed the partner organisations' existing policies, including those related to safeguarding, human resources, codes of conduct, etc. This data-analysis provided baseline materials upon which individual and group consultations and virtual workshops were formulated.

3.2 Individual Consultations

Thirty interviews were conducted in the form of individual consultations with WILPF's partner organisations, as well as with the partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries that make up each partner organisation's network of relationships. Participation levels varied from one organisation to another, as some were more open and generous with their time, experiences, and relationship networks, and some showed little interest in this process of knowledge production. Throughout these consultations, we contacted representatives of organisations from various positionalities, including members of the board of directors, individuals in senior and middle management, workers, administrators, HR, volunteers, consultants, and beneficiaries. The focus of individual consultations was sharing experiences, deconstructing concepts, and creating spaces for deeper understanding of the relationships and social processes that exist in organisations at the internal and external levels. Through these consultations, we gained an in-depth sense of the practical obstacles and conceptual gaps contained in traditional safeguarding policies, as well as an understanding of some of the common gaps and flaws in feminist concepts that seriously inhibit organisations' ability to combat abusive practices.

3.3 Group Consultations

In addition, we used the same feminist pedagogy that we applied to individual consultations in order to conduct virtual group consultations. For the purposes of our formal research, we leveraged CTDC's network and organised three online sessions with women from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Sudan and Jordan. Some participants were living in these countries, and others were living in the Global North. The main objectives of the sessions were to:

- Deconstruct some of the terms and definitions that describe abusive practices and break down their meanings.
- Think together about innovative means and solutions for confronting abusive practices in organisations.
- Think about different forms of justice that centre survivors and societal wellbeing.
- Think collectively about solutions to difficult scenarios and moral dilemmas.
- Analyse a real story about an incident of exploitation encountered by an organisation.

These group consultations with people from different Arabic-speaking countries allowed us to examine (1) differences in linguistic use that sometimes constitute an obstacle in the region to calling offensive practices by their names and (2) differences in contextual structural sensitivities. The sessions provided a space for group reflection on our ability to cooperate transnationally to confront exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, bullying and other abusive practices prevalent in CSOs and activist circles.

3.4 Virtual Workshops and Trainings

As part of the capacity-building program for WILPF partners, CTDC experts developed training materials for virtual workshops that use an intersectional feminist perspective to address the concepts of community accountability and response to exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying, as well as the concepts of feminist politics of care and emotional responsibility. These topics were selected both for their importance in safeguarding and in order to build on the procedural knowledge that was gained through the 2019 CRM training. Furthermore, the workshops were a valuable opportunity to accumulate knowledge, understand challenges, and reflect both on the importance of these topics in safeguarding and on how we can practice them as individuals and organisations. The knowledge resources offered in these virtual workshops addressed the following topics:

- Accountability from an intersectional feminist perspective,
- Deconstructing the concepts of relationality, affect, blame, harm, and responsibility,
- The difference between blame culture and accountability culture,
- The chain of accountability as a logic sensitive to oppressive structures,
- Guidelines for dealing with societal violence put forth by CARA (Communities Against Rape and Abuse),
- Dealing with emotionalities in the workplace,
- The difference between care responsibilities associated with women's domestic labour and feminist politics of care,
- Specifications and requirements of care policies and feminist politics of care,
- The logic of the global care chain,
- Emotional responsibility, projection, and prejudices,
- Types of emotionalities and ways to deal with them to reduce prejudices and abusive practices,
- Strategic empathy and the power of vulnerability.

3.5 Ethnographic Data

In addition to formal research methods, this toolkit has been enriched by a huge amount of ethnographic data that was accumulated both through our experience in the field and through discussion, particularly those we engaged in during the last year. This toolkit has benefited from the outcome of conversations about abusive practices of exploitation, assault, sexual harassment and more, especially during training. In the past year, the authors provided training for 40 men and women trainees in Iraq (Diyala and Kirkuk), about 90 in Syria (Idlib, Aleppo, Raqqa, Sweida and Damascus), and approximately 100 in Palestine. The toolkit also benefited from a series of virtual discussions launched by CTDC in the midst of the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These discussions spanned a period of nearly 20 weeks and included 45 Arabic-speaking women participants from Libya, Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and some countries of the Global North.

3.6 Additional Collaborations

This toolkit also benefited indirectly from experiences that arose in previous collaborations, such as:

- Developing and experimenting with governance systems and accountability frameworks for various grassroots initiatives and groups,
- Fiscal sponsorship support program CTDC provides for grassroots initiatives, the framework of which is based on the principles of feminist safeguarding and accountability,
- Developing a feminist accountability framework applicable at all organisational levels in co-operation with the Syrian Female Journalists Network,
- Experience in the field of organisational development and governance with both feminist and non-feminist organisations,
- Trainings on feminist governance and account-ability for a large number of CSOs.

The following sections focus on the practical tools that we arrived at through this methodology, as well as other research methods and data from the literature and various sources.

4 Terms and Definitions

To be able to respond to violence and abusive practices both generally and within organisations we must be able to name them, identify them as they occur, and describe them in case of reporting. The inorganic exporting of safeguarding models from donors and international organisations into CSOs that operate in Arabic-speaking countries has led to mistakes caused by differing translations of terms from PSEA policies and from the 4Ps framework which is aimed at combating human trafficking. Moreover, we also found limitations in the English-language terminology itself. For example, the word abuse, which means wrongdoing or harm, is used in the context of PSEA specifically to describe abuse of a physical-sexual nature and does not include many practices that may be classified as sexually abusive or harmful. According to United Nations (UN) definitions, sexual abuse is any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. We find, however, that the most accurate word to describe this abusive practice is sexual assault. That is why we chose to use “assault” rather than “abuse,” because we consider bullying and harassment to be abuse, even if they are not physical assaults of a sexual nature. We also recognised a shortcoming in safeguarding systems that focus only on protection from abusive practices of a sexual nature, as we believe that physical violence must also be considered assault for it to be addressed through OSSs. Additionally, we can classify online blackmail as both bullying and exploitation. It is important to note here that these abusive practices may overlap in the terminology, and that the same practice can be classified into several categories divided by a blurry line. Some forms of bullying can be considered assault, and some forms of harassment can be considered exploitation or assault. All forms of bullying, harassment, and assault can be classified as different forms of exploitation. For example, there must be hierarchies of power at play for an abusive practice to be considered exploitation, but all

types of abusive practices involve power dynamics, be they subtle or overt, and most abusive practices stem from a sense of superiority harboured by the aggressor.

The following sections address the definitions that we recommend for organisational use. Derived from field research, they will take the reader through a journey of deconstruction into the common uses of these words. We highlight abusive practices that are not usually included in safeguarding systems that focus only on sexual abuse. One of the most notable findings from our field research and accumulative experience is that any organisation whose governance allows for the exploitation and appropriation of labour is usually fertile ground for abuse, sexual and otherwise. We also found that organisations with weak financial controls usually have an environment that enables harassment and exploitation. Thus, the following sections seek to address exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying, and to speak to intersectional, multidimensional perspectives that focus on safeguarding more than just a single dimension of our humanity and relationality. We do not consider these sections to be exhaustive of all kinds of abuse that may arise in work environments. Rather, as definitions continue to evolve, ever under construction and subject to change, we see this as a first step in thinking about other manifestations of abuse. We must also note that these practices, which reflect the misuse of power in one way or another, may intersect and intertwine. For instance, we can consider assault to be exploitation and harassment, and we can consider various forms of bullying as harassment or assault. Therefore, we try in what follows to address common practices that fall into these categories, especially those that may occur in organisations.

4.1 Exploitation

Let us begin with a general definition of exploitation that will provide a basis for understanding its various forms: Exploitation occurs when a person or group of persons uses their power, status, or positionality for personal benefit through the use of force, duress, violence, coercion, deceit, or trickery that causes direct or indirect harm to another person or group of persons, or to public interest. Exploitation differs from other forms of abuse in that something is considered to be exploitation only when hierarchies of power exist between aggressor and victim.

Power and Exploitation

In order to understand exploitation, we must understand the manifold ways in which hierarchies of power play a role in determining what kind of abuse has occurred.

At the organisational level, attention to hierarchies of power can play a big role in identifying the gaps that allow for exploitation.

To varying degrees, we all possess different forms of power that are determined by time and space.

In this safeguarding framework, an analysis of power helps to understand the context in which we are responding to the aggressor. It is through this analysis that we can comprehend the sources of their power and thus, how to deal with them. It is important to understand what power they have that allows them to cause and persist in causing harm. Chapter 5 of this toolkit focuses on our understanding of power and its meanings. We have found existing literature wanting in its analysis of power, as it places focus on the concept of power from a material standpoint, while other forms of power such as emotional or social and symbolic power are overlooked.

The following are common types of exploitation within organisations:

4.1.1 Sexual exploitation:

Any actual or attempted abuse or exploitation for sexual purposes perpetrated against people in weak or vulnerable positions within hierarchies of power. This vulnerability may be due to a range of differences, including social, political, economic, emotional, and cognitive power and ability. Sexual exploitation can include rape, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual violence, as well as requesting and compelling someone to grant sexual favours in exchange for benefits. Sexual exploitation also includes human trafficking for sexual purposes and child abuse.

Exploitation includes:

- Requests for sexual favours in exchange for benefits.
- Human trafficking for sexual purposes.
- Child abuse.
- Forced sexual activity.

Sexual exploitation also involves the following elements:

- Hierarchies of power or unequal access to resources.
- Sexual nature of the imposed activity.
- The absence of victim's consent or the absence of conditions that allow for agreement or refusal.

Note: All sexual practices with minors are considered exploitation, regardless of the aforementioned factors.

Let us determine whether the following examples should be classified as sexual exploitation:

Example: A human resources director facilitates contract agreements for an immigrant woman in a country where worker rights are unclear. During a meeting to discuss legal matters, the HR director grabs the new employee's hand without permission and says; "don't worry, we will help you with the legal papers."

Answer: This is considered exploitation as it satisfies the following conditions:

- Hierarchies of power or unequal access to resources (unequal power between the director and the immigrant);
- Sexual nature of the imposed activity (hand-holding);
- The absence of victim's consent or the absence of conditions that allow for agreement or refusal (no permission).

Example 1: An employee is in an intimate relationship with his line manager. The relationship was formed with consent and agreement.

Example 2: An intern likes his mentor and tries to get close to him. The two decide together to go to the dressing room and have sex. During the experience, the intern decides to stop and tells the mentor that he no longer wants to continue. The mentor gets angry and threatens to expose the intern's sexual orientation.

Answers

Answer 1: Exploitation did not occur.

Answer 2: Exploitation occurred.

4.1.2 Emotional Exploitation:

The deliberate use of emotionality to influence others for purposes that are self-serving or against public interest. This can be verbal or non-verbal, as in the case of gestures and crying. Examples include soliciting sympathy to evade responsibility; urging people to do what they would not otherwise do without emotional influence; and exploiting someone's love in order to deceive them. Emotional exploitation can also occur through blackmail and through withholding information to control reactions. Emotional exploitation is very difficult to detect, as it is usually based on the manipulation of truth, reality, and feelings.

Emotional exploitation is also difficult to define, because traditional hierarchies of power do not account for emotional exploitation. In order to better understand emotional exploitation, we must better understand the emotional power possessed by those practising exploitation.

Common signs of emotional exploitation:

- Feeling of inability to confront the exploiter.
- Lack of hard evidence.
- Mismatch between actions and verbal promises.
- Exploiter playing the victim.
- Constant claiming of victimhood without taking responsibility.
- Use of the "offense is the best defence" tactic.
- Manipulating and questioning the truth, reality, and feelings of the emotionally exploited party.

Examples from the workplace:

Example: Someone claims (falsely) that they are going through difficult circumstances in order to get support from their colleagues and evade responsibility.

Example: A feminist initiative is made up of eight women with varied levels of engagement. Some are active and others have a limited contribution. This disparity does not constitute a problem, as it has been agreed upon that each woman would do the work that she feels comfortable doing. One member who is inactive expresses guilt during every meeting, but offers no alternatives. This always elicits emotional support and expressions of sympathy for her.

Example: A manager is in love with his woman colleague and wants to be her romantic partner. Their relationship is based on consent and agreement, but whenever he makes a business decision she does not like, she pressures him with passive aggression or withdrawal.

Examples from daily life:

Example: A woman lived with her husband for ten years. After separating, she discovers that he was impersonating the identity of another person, and using another name because he was working as a spy, targeting political groups in which she was engaged.

Example: In a relationship that lasted for four years, one partner claimed that they were committed to the relationship despite planning for two years to travel abroad and leave the relationship.

4.1.3 Exploitation of Labour and Economic Resources:

The use of force, violence, duress, coercion, deceit, trickery, or de facto reality against a person or group of persons for material, economic, or professional benefits. This includes bodily exploitation and exploiting people's physical, mental, and cognitive abilities. It also includes exploitation of and monopolies over material and financial resources.

This type of exploitation comes in many forms that differ in their intensity and affect and range from human trafficking to the appropriation of labour. Nevertheless, they all fall under the heading of material and economic exploitation. Some forms may be illegal in certain places, while others are not taken seriously or penalised by the law.

Forms of exploitation of labour and economic resources include:

- Child labour.
- Human trafficking.
- Trafficking in human organs.
- Appropriating the labour of others and failing to acknowledge their efforts.
- Looting property during or after displacement.
- Forced labour.
- Enslavement.
- Exploitation of women's domestic labour.

Example:

A manager asks her assistant to write a report about changing security conditions. The manager praises the report, commends the employee's effort, and it stops there. Six months later, during a meeting with the board of directors, a chairperson praises the report and the great work done by the manager.

Example:

Rabab works for a CSO on a part-time contract. Rabab spends more than 40 hours a week serving this organisation and on weekends her manager asks her to take on additional assignments.

4.2 Assault

Let us begin by defining assault in order to then understand its different forms:

Assault is any actual or attempted aggressive act that deliberately violates or threatens the physical space of an individual or group. Assault usually has a physical character, and in some cases it may be both physical and sexual. Hierarchies of power between the aggressor and the victim are not required in order for something to be considered an abusive practice in the category of assault. It is often believed that assault is limited to direct physical violations only, but as a concept it also includes indirect infringement on personal space.

Assault and power:

It is not required that there be differences in power between the aggressor and the victim. Assault can be perpetrated by parties that do not occupy a higher rank than the victim within hierarchies of power.

Personal Space

The boundaries of individual personal space are subjective, as each person determines their own personal space, i.e. that which they consider to be their own, private domain. What people think of as personal space varies, as a home may be personal space while it is also open for visitors, and a person's after work time may also be personal space. For some, if a person gets closer than two meters to them it is a violation of their personal space. Personal space is a private entitlement. Although it is affected by time, place, circumstances, and relationality, a person determines it for themselves. For example, our requirements for personal space vary depending on the type of relationships and boundaries we build with others. It might be normal for my dad to call me after eight o'clock, but abnormal for a co-worker to call me at the same time. I may accept a gift from a close colleague, and I may not accept the same gift from another colleague.

To avoid violating the boundaries of personal space, it is important to ask permission to approach others, enter their homes, rooms, or offices, or to call them at certain times.

Personal space can also be thought of in a non-material form, in terms of the boundaries of the topics we discuss or the personal questions we ask.

The person in front of us should be our reference point for understanding their personal space.

Note:

Consent and refusal cannot be limited to explicit verbal communication, as people sometimes find it difficult to refuse outright due to hierarchies of power or other circumstances. In these situations, consent or refusal may not be explicit and may depend on our reading of non-verbal signs, such as silence, changes in face colour and body language change, tears, and other nonverbal signs.

Types of Assault

4.2.1 Sexual assault

Sexual assault is the intentional violation or attempt to violate the personal space of a person or group of persons in a sexual manner through force, coercion, violence, threats, or intimidation. In order for something to be considered sexual assault, it is not required that it involve rape or that the body be exposed.

Examples:

- Touching another person sexually without consent.
- Forced penetration with sexual organs or other equipment and devices into the vagina, anus, or mouth.
- Engaging in sexual activity under the influence of drugs and alcohol if they are impairing the other person's ability to give explicit informed consent.
- Sexual torture or torture of the sexual organs.
- Forced sexual intercourse without consent (applies to married people).
- Forced engagement in sexual practices, such as touching or stroking the aggressor's genitalia.

4.2.2 Physical Assault

Physical assault is the intentional violation of or attempt to violate the body of a person or group of persons through force, coercion, violence, threats, or intimidation. It can include hitting, kicking, or otherwise using the body to threaten or otherwise practice harmful and unwanted physical actions.

Examples:

- A man is assaulted in the street by another man.
- A beneficiary hits a humanitarian worker to express her frustration with the scarcity of aid.
- Flexing muscles as a threat.
- Banging on furniture or walls as an expression of anger.
- Intrusion on another's physical space by pressing against them without their express consent.

4.2.3 Verbal Assault

This is a form of assault wherein someone attacks a person or group of persons using words. This includes criticizing, insulting, or denigrating another person in a violent manner and expressing anger aggressively or loudly. It may also include the threat of physical or sexual assault.

Examples:

- Threatening rape.
- Slurs, derogatory language, slander, and insults.
- Using raised voices as a means of intimidation.

4.3 Harassment

The term *taḥarrush* is used in Arabic-speaking countries to describe a large number of abusive practices that include exploitation, abuse, and bullying. In some cases, this constitutes obstacles in determining the type of practice to which the victim has been subjected. In some cases, we found that this linguistic ambiguity contributes to impunity and failures to address root problems related to systems that allow for the harassment or any form of abusive practices to occur in the first place.

Therefore, in this toolkit we try to delicately deconstruct these terms and call offensive practices by their names such that the nature of the practice will correspond with the words used to describe it. Furthermore, harassment cannot be limited to practices of a sexual nature as there is a wide range of practices that fall under the umbrella of harassment and that do not necessarily have a sexual character. In addition, bullying is distinct from harassment in that bullying is more frequent and systematic, while harassment can occur only once. Harassment and bullying are also distinct from assault in that harassment can include assault, but it can also include other practices that are not covered by assault, such as making implicit and unwanted sexual gestures and advances.

Here is a general definition of harassment

Harassment is a group of unwanted abusive practices that are threatening to the recipient by their very nature. These behaviours need not be repeated in order to be considered harassment, nor must there be a discrepancy in power between the harasser and the harassed. In addition, unlike bullying, harassment need not be targeted. It may take place directly or indirectly, so that it creates an atmosphere of distress, heaviness and insecurity, Harassment may occur through merely addressing someone with talk, for example. Harassment may occur face to face, through a third party, or through the internet.

Types of harassment

4.3.1 Physical harassment:

Any abusive and unwanted practice, action, or behaviour that a person or group of persons may be exposed to and that has a direct or indirect physical character.

Examples:

- Touch that suggests physical threat.
- Patting the neck, shoulders, or other part of the body in a threatening way.
- Any form of unwanted physical contact.
- Threatening looks and physical gestures.
- Using tools, equipment, or weapons that suggest a physical threat.
- Stalking and any form of encroachment on personal space.
- Direct physical threats to cause harm or damage.
- Vandalising property.

4.3.2 Verbal harassment:

Any abusive and unwanted practice, action, or behaviour to which a person or group of persons may be exposed through spoken utterances and words, can be direct or indirect.

Examples:

- Unwanted comments (may be directed at another's body, appearance, features, or positionality).
- Insults, slurs, and the use of language that is unacceptable or unwanted by the recipient.
- Any form of verbal attack, including raising one's voice with the aim of threatening, intimidation, or exclusion.
- Unconstructive critical comments.
- Verbal joking, humour, and play that has a discriminatory, sarcastic, or mocking tone.
- Indirect comments that are aimed at someone through the false pretence of direct speech to a third-party.

It is important to remember that we can cause others distress, that amounts to harassment, by using a sarcastic or mocking tone even if we are using the nicest words.

Example:

> An employee delivered a finished product that was required of her. After a few hours, one of her co-workers called out to her and said with a bad look on her face: "By God, bravo! After all this time this is what you came out with? Well done."
>
> In such cases, we must prioritise the way in which the recipient of this type of verbal harassment characterises the events. These cases contain passive aggression that can be difficult to identify as harassment by a third party.

4.3.3 Sexual harassment:

Any abusive and unwanted practice, action, or behaviour of a sexual nature to which a person or group of persons is exposed directly or indirectly. This can include non-physical sexual and/or verbal behaviours that cannot be classified as assault.

Examples:

- Sharing photos, videos, or recordings of a sexual nature.
- Sexual comments, jokes, and questions.
- Touching with sexual intentions.
- Sexual insinuations and gestures, such as winking or prolonged staring.
- Certain physical movements that contain sexual innuendos.
- Gift-giving with the aim of establishing sexual relations.
- Encroachment on individuals' personal space for sexual purposes (personal space includes a person's private time).
- Continually asking people on dates despite repeated rejections.
- Unwanted flirtation.

Definition of Retaliatory Harassment

Unwanted abusive behaviours that may occur as a form of revenge against the receiving party. Retaliatory harassment can take any form, be that physical, verbal, or sexual. It may also appear in the form of bullying. In the workplace, this type of harassment may appear in the following manner:

1. An employee files a complaint against someone in the workplace.
2. The person about whom the report was filed finds out which of his colleagues filed the complaint.
3. The aggressor retaliates through other forms of harassment in order to prevent his colleagues from filing further complaints.

In this way, this type of harassment is retaliatory.

4.4 Bullying

Bullying is any abusive practice or behaviour directed by an individual or group of individuals towards another individual or group. Bullying can be considered a form of harassment that is more frequent and systematic. It aims not only to violate the receiving party, but also to belittle them. Bullying is characterised by being targeted at a person or group of persons, while harassment need not be targeted. Typically, a bully feels more powerful than the targeted party, which could be due to possessing a position of authority, or other physical, social, and/or emotional power. Bullying can occur face to face, through the use of a third party, online, or via social media. We can determine that a practice is bullying by identifying any of the following:

- Repetition.
- Systematicity.
- Escalating aggressiveness.
- A power disparity between the aggressor and the target (thinking holistically about power).
- Targeting.

Types of bullying

4.4.1 Physical bullying:

Any abusive practice, behaviour, or action of a physical nature directed by an individual or group of individuals in a targeting manner towards another person or group of persons. Physical bullying is repetitive and systematic, and it reflects a difference in physical and bodily power between the aggressor and the victim. This power may be due to physical strength or other factors, such as access to a weapon. The following acts are examples of physical bullying so long as they are characterised by repetition:

- Hitting, pinching, biting, punching, pushing, shoving, and other abusive physical behaviour.
- Physical gestures aimed at belittling, threatening, or shaming others.
- Off-putting looks and facial expressions that are aimed at belittling a person or group of persons.
- Theft and vandalism of property.
- Violating personal or physical space, i.e., entering someone's office by force or without permission.

4.4.2 Verbal bullying:

Any abusive, unwanted, and potentially belittling verbal expression directed by an individual or group of individuals in a targeted manner towards another person or a group of persons. While verbal bullying may be frequent and systematic, it need not reflect a power disparity between the aggressor and the target.

Examples:

- Slurs, insults, and criticism aimed at threatening or belittling the target.
- Frequent and systematic verbal threats.
- Shouting at or speaking to someone in a rude and mean tone.
- Mocking someone's voice or speech.
- Calling people vulgar, derogatory, or judgemental names in order to belittle them.
- Mockery, teasing, and laughing at a person or group of persons.
- Disregarding the ideas, words, and opinions of another person.
- Frequent and systematic interruptions.

Definition of Belittlement

Belittling others is a form of abuse in and of itself. It involves a covert, malicious, and gradual attempt to demean and undermine the effectiveness, power, ability, character, ideas, opinions, choices, or preferences of another person, directly or indirectly. Because belittlement reduces the power and agency of one person or group and elevates another, it is typically one of the goals of bullying. It is also a type of emotional abuse, and it is sometimes used to cover up other forms of abuse. All too often we see that people practising abuse resort to belittling the other party in order to justify said abuse. They do this by questioning their abilities, skills, opinions, and feelings, and manipulating their sense of reality. For example, many victims of intimate violence feel that they deserve violence and abuse. This feeling is usually the result of a series of other abusive practices that make them question their own reality and thus affects their sense of self-worth.

How do we determine if we are being belittled?

- General gossip in the workplace usually indicates that someone is being belittled.
- Attempts to plant negative and baseless ideas about other people and the nature of work is a form of belittlement.
- Those who belittle others do so either by appropriating the labour of others or by blaming failure on others.
- Intellectual bullying, i.e. putting down the ideas and suggestions of others or criticizing them unconstructively, is a form of belittlement.
- Concealing important information from one's colleagues and attempting to trick them into making mistakes, for example, not telling them about the date of an important meeting, is a form of belittlement.
- Those who try to belittle others try to exclude their victims or withhold information related to social events, meetings, or tasks.

4.4.3 Indirect bullying:

The systematic and frequent targeting of a person or group of persons with the aim of threatening or belittling by way of other parties and indirect means.

Examples:

- Spreading rumours and lies about the target person or group.
- Excluding them from certain groups and spaces and denying them opportunities such as promotion, training, or activities.
- Images, graffiti, and videos made to embarrass and belittle some person or group.
- Infringements on privacy.
- Attempting to sabotage a person or group by overburdening them with work or setting impossible deadlines.
- Appropriating work, labour, ideas, or opinions.
- Setting traps to get a person or group in trouble.
- Sabotaging relationships between people either within or outside of the work environment.
- Passive aggressiveness.
- Making employees feel job insecurity.

4.4.4 Cyberbullying:

The systematic and repeated targeting of a person or a group of persons through virtual means (i.e. via electronic communication, online, or on social media). This form of bullying is relatively recent, as it emerged in concert with the technological developments in communication. Cyberbullying can take several forms.

Examples:

- Assuming someone's identity by publishing posts or sending unacceptable messages in their name.
- Using inflammatory or profane language aimed at causing conflict online.
- Spreading private or false information about people online with the aim of shaming.
- Excluding individuals or groups from cyber spaces in which they have the right to be.
- Online stalking through unwanted messaging, calling, or commenting.

4.4.5 Intellectual bullying:

The use of knowledge or claims to knowledge in an extravagant or aggressive manner that aims to belittle the intellect or practices of a person or group of persons; intellectual bullying casts its target as intellectually inferior or unsophisticated, thus incapable of rising to the level of the intellectual bully, who feels they do not need to learn because they are all-knowing.

Examples:

- Ignoring and belittling the opinions and ideas of the other party, can include looking away when they speak or giving them rude looks.
- Avoiding actual discussion by dubbing ideas invalid or responding to them with insulting language.
- Using descriptors to silence the other party and avoid delving into the heart of an issue, i.e. “am I not an expert on the subject?” Or, “you’re not a feminist,” and “you don’t have the degree I have.”
- Undermining the other person’s credibility wholesale, i.e. “but you’re always wrong.”
- Using questions sarcastically to diminish the other’s knowledge rather for the purpose of understanding, listening, and learning. Insincere questions can sound like this: “do you have any studies that you can cite? Have you read anything about this?”

Note:
Harassment and bullying need not take place in person. Both can take place through phone calls or written communication such as letters and online chatting. They may also include surveillance tools used by supervisors such as monitoring computers or phones and placing surveillance cameras in employee offices.

Feminist Bullying

It became clear throughout our research that there is a specific type of bullying that is used in circles that claim to be feminist in order to silence others and avoid responsibility. Feminist bullying manifests itself in the characterisation of certain people, practices, and ideas as unfeminist, and in attending claims to have accessed ideal feminist knowledge.

We found that this is a common practice that it is sometimes used against men involved in feminist movements, as well as against women who express desires to adhere to religious traditions, such as wearing the veil. It is also used against women who wish to marry, have children, or otherwise follow conventional social roles such as performing childcare or having many children. Women who want to have several children are described with ugly and stigmatising terms, to the extent that some supposed feminists will even call for the forced sterilisation of poor and refugee women. Feminist bullying is also used against transgender people and works to exclude them on the grounds that their gender identities contradict feminist concepts. Generally speaking, this type of bullying is based on the false belief that there is one version of feminism that all women must follow. It seems that many fall into the trap of being judgmental, making accusations, and virtue-signalling, thus feeding an elitist discourse about what feminism and feminist practices are. This behaviour can be contrasted with engaging in constructive discussions that build on the meanings of feminism rather than turning them into a false and imaginary label.

Despite problems with feminist discourse in the Arabic-speaking region, we have to be careful about stigmatising certain behaviours as unfeminist. All feminists have never gotten together to come up with a single, uniform feminist framework to be followed by everyone. It is important to view feminist discourse as continually evolving and changing as we discuss contradictions and thorny subjects without self-aggrandising or casting judgement on one another. Feminism as a body of political thought is comprised of many different schools worldwide. There is a vast difference between engaging in discussion about what feminism is and accusing people of being unfeminist because we are dissatisfied with their chosen lifestyle or feminist approach. For example, debates about whether or not a feminist framework is useful in relation to a specific action or context differ from bullying that uses the word feminist as an identity, as though it has fixed or specific criteria.

Examples of feminist bullying:

- In order to avoid accountability, an employee accuses her organisation of being unfeminist and abusive when she is asked about why her work was submitted late.
- A woman is accused of being unfeminist because she decided to conceive, breastfeed, or stop working to take care of children.
- “Don’t talk about feminist philosophy, you’re a man. You won’t understand.”
- “I don’t believe you’re a feminist, you wear a hijab.”
- Men sometimes use claims of being feminist as a means to evade accountability for sexual harassment.

4.5 Forms of Discrimination

In the above we offered an overview of definitions and forms of exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying, but we have not yet touched on those abusive practices that are based on discrimination. It must be noted that all of the aforementioned abusive practices can be based on discrimination against certain social groups. This section will deal with the main features that make groups vulnerable to discrimination that can manifest as violence and abusive practices. Marginalised and non-dominant social groups are commonly exposed to exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying.

4.5.1 Race and Ethnicity

Many abusive practices target individuals belonging to certain racial categories or ethnic groups, or of a certain skin colour, in addition to linguistic minorities or non-Arabic speakers in the region. Discrimination based on race and ethnicity may occur in our organisations in various forms, including exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying.

Examples:

- Regarding or discussing dark skin as though it is shameful or different.
- Shaming certain racial or ethnic groups for their customs and traditions.
- Limiting people from certain racial or ethnic groups to specific jobs.
- Hiring new employees based on the racial or ethnic groups to which they belong, i.e. discriminatory hiring practices.
- Using derogatory languages that targets racial or ethnic groups in the context of jokes, humour, and play.
- Making negative generalisations about certain racial or ethnic groups being backwards, stubborn, or any number of demeaning characterisations.
- The sexualisation and fetishization of entire communities, such as remarks about their genital sizes or their sexual practices being “different” or “unusual.”
- Excluding non-Arabic speaking groups and communities from jobs or gatherings in which they have the right to be.

4.5.2 Sexuality

This form of discrimination occurs as abusive practices target people because of their sexual, intimate and reproductive choices and preferences. This may occur in many forms, including exploitation, bullying, harassment, assault and even blackmail. Our definition of non-normative individuals is those who do not satisfy patriarchal and/or heteronormative gender expectations and sexual norms. This includes but is not limited to those who self-identify as LGBTQ.

Examples:

- Shaming women who have extramarital sex.
- Shaming women who do not want to have children.
- Shaming people who have same-sex intimate relationships.
- Use of profane language to describe non-normative people.
- Shaming gender performances and sexual practices that do not fit dominant norms.

4.5.3 Age

Discrimination based on age occurs in the form of abusive practices that target individuals according to their age. It may be directed towards children, the elderly, or young men and women, but the manifestations of this form of discrimination differ according to the age-category in question. Harm and damage directed towards children is always considered a form of exploitation.

Examples:

- Excluding people from workplaces and jobs because of their age.
- Belittling people because of their young age ("When you grow up you'll understand").
- Treating younger people as though they were children (infantilisation).
- Excluding women from particular jobs after a certain age.
- Making exclusionary judgments of people after a certain age ("they won't understand us, they're an older generation").

4.5.4 Disability

This type of discrimination occurs in the form of abusive practices that target people with special mental and physical needs, and through the use of special needs as an insult. This harm has many forms, including exploitation, harassment, bullying.

Examples:

- Mimicking people with Tourette's syndrome or the movements of someone with reduced mobility.
- Using derogatory words such as "retarded," "idiot," or "freak."
- Using special mental, physical and psychological needs as an insult.
- Depriving people with special needs of certain jobs.
- Not providing accessible spaces for people with reduced mobility.

4.5.5 Religion, Faith, and Beliefs

Discrimination of this form occurs in abusive practices that target people due to their religion, faith, or beliefs, including their ideologies or political positions.

Examples:

- Not providing days off during religious holidays and not taking employees' religious holidays into consideration.
- Ridiculing, preventing, or otherwise being insensitive towards religious clothing and customs.
- Depriving and excluding certain groups from jobs and spaces due to religion, faith, or belief.
- Degrading and stereotypical comments, such as stigmatising religions or religious people as reactionary.
- Jokes, humour, and play the content of which constitutes mockery of certain religions, faiths or beliefs.
- Discrimination based on religious dress and appearance, such as not appointing veiled women to certain jobs or imposing the full shaving of beards in workplaces ("they don't want us to look like ISIS").
- Discrimination against people because they do not share our beliefs or practices

4.5.6 Gender and Sex

Discrimination based on gender and sex occurs in many forms. It usually targets women and those who do not meet gendered social expectations.

Examples:

- A man being harassed for doing women's work because of his job as a nurse.
- Limiting women to certain positions, or certain levels of authority, or to work that is considered women's work.
- Not giving women senior administrative positions.
- Jokes, humour, and play that uses stereotypes of women, men, or gender non-normative people, such as comments about the way women drive cars, or the way effeminate men walk, talk, and move.
- All assaults and harassment that are motivated by a person's gender expression.
- Telling women that they got their jobs only for the purposes of representation, not due to their merits.

4.5.7 Social, Economic, and Political Class

Some people are vulnerable to abusive practices because of their social, economic or political classes. This harm may take many forms, including economic exploitation, violence, or stigmatisation.

Examples:

- Using working-class people as cheap labour and not giving them opportunities for professional development.
- Stigmatising the lifestyles of people who belong to the working class, such as judging their reproductive habits or life choices.
- Violence against people belonging to non-dominant political classes; takes many forms such as imprisonment, beatings, etc.
- The discriminatory stigmatisation of women's professional choices, such as judging the nature of their work as inferior or unrespectable.
- Stigmatising women's choices to do unpaid work as socio-economic inferiority.
- Using words that have ethnic origins to stigmatise a working-class person or group of people, such as the Arabic words nawar, ghajar, qurbāt, or shawāyā (all offensive variations of the word "nomad," the first three are also exonyms of Levantine Gypsies).

4.5.8 Marital Status or Caring Duties

This form of discrimination is often motivated by a person's marital status. For example, divorced, widowed, and single women, especially those who live alone, are vulnerable to various forms of violence, discrimination, and harm. Women can also be vulnerable to discrimination because of their caring status. Employers hesitate or avoid hiring women if they care for children or have other caring duties.

Examples:

- Community violence, including stigmas against women divorcees.
- Discrimination against married women related to the labour market or job access.
- Excluding married women or breastfeeding mothers from social gatherings.
- Discrimination against men who do not meet community expectations related to providing for their families.

4.5.9 Nationality, Immigration, and Citizenship Status

Statuses related to immigration, asylum, displacement, nationality and citizenship are all grounds on which people can be vulnerable to all kinds of violence, including physical, social, economic and organisational violence.

Examples:

- Not allowing refugees to work in host countries.
- Not providing health, educational, and financial services for immigrants.
- Discrimination and racism that takes many forms, including physical and verbal.
- A lack of access to identification documents for a large number of people, creating grave obstacles in their lives.
- Exploiting migrant and refugee men and women as cheap and sometimes forced labour.

4.5.10 Physical Characteristics and Dress

Many people are vulnerable to discrimination and harm because of their physical characteristics, dress, or appearance. This form of discrimination can include exploitation, abuse, harassment, and bullying, and it may be motivated by size and height; length and style of hair; and dress and appearance, such as wearing a hijab or growing out one's beard.

Examples:

- Mocking women whose size, weight, height, skin colour, hair quality, etc. do not meet beauty standards of the dominant culture.
- Assaults against veiled women and bearded men.
- Assaults against women who choose to wear clothing described as "immodest."
- Using offensive words to describe bodies.

5 Analysing Power

As we have noted, in most safeguarding contexts power is analysed from a narrow perspective that fails to address its complexities, entanglements, and various non-traditional and non-physical manifestations. For example, analysis of power in organisations is based only on given power or that which is derived from positions and titles, and does not consider emotional or cognitive power.

When responding to abusive practices at the level of organisations, groups, and initiatives, however, we need to analyse power in several respects.

First: Analysing power enables us to understand structural flaws at the organisational level, specifically those that affect relationships between members of the same community. Hierarchies of power in and of themselves are a structural flaw that can enable exploitation, abuse, harassment, and bullying. Although discrepancies in power are not required for certain situations to be considered assault, bullying, or harassment, an analysis of power analysis is still necessary in order to understand the structural flaws that allow for the misuse of power to happen.

With this understanding, organisations can anticipate harm and establish procedures, processes, and measures that reduce the potential for any form of power to be misused.

Second: The analysis of power enables us to understand an aggressor's context and background. Just as most responses must seek to reduce the power of the aggressor, they must also seek to understand affect.

When there is knowledge about the power that perpetrators have, organisations can better plan actions to be taken against them. This also requires that we assess the risks facing survivors such as retaliation, threats, or other consequences that may cause them harm.

Third: We can analyse our own sources of power through the practices of personal accountability and self-reflection, which we need in order to improve our relationships on an individual level. Social change begins with individuals.

We need the skills of power-analysis and self-reflection in order to be able to respond to abusive practices without the process being affected by our prejudices and projections at any stage, from receiving a complaint and reporting, to investigating and response-planning. Therefore, it is important that we understand our own affective influence by understanding the forms of power we possess.

It is also important to note that we all possess different forms of power. Thus, in this context, power is distinct from authority. We consider authority to be the ability to make decisions, give orders, and ensure the obedience of others. While we all have powers of different degrees, authority may come from a position or title, from a social status, or from an intimate form of power such as personality, knowledge, cognitive and verbal abilities, etc.

While we all have power in different forms, we do not necessarily have authority. Abusive practices occur anytime power or authority are misused.

It is extremely important when conducting an analysis of power to take the intersectionality of forms of power into account. We must refrain from regarding the types of power mentioned here as though they are separate from one another. Rather, these classifications are meant to help us to understand them more comprehensively and accurately, and to call them by their names. It is also important that we do not understand power in its various forms as merely individual, as it is usually derived from oppressive structures that bestow power on individuals in different ways. As individuals, we cannot separate ourselves from intersecting systems of oppression that may grant us forms of power or take them away.

5.1 Symbolic-Social Power

We all possess social power in different forms. This power usually comes from symbolic value given to us by positionality and social status. Degrees of power between us vary according to a set of factors that includes: (1) social, economic, and political class; (2) age; (3) parenting and care duties; (4) physical and cognitive abilities; (5) sex and gender; (6) marital status; (7) religion, faith, and beliefs; (8) skin colour; (9) race or ethnicity; (10) nationality and citizenship status; (11) immigration status; (12) academic, linguistic, and intellectual attainment; and (13) clothing and appearance. These are some of the characteristics that can grant symbolic-social power.

These factors affect the degrees of our influence on society and the individuals around us, which in turn make up a form of power that sometimes becomes authority.

Between individuals, these social hierarchies create an opportunity for the misuse of powers or authority. This does not necessarily mean that authority and power are bad or flawed as individual characteristics, but simply that their misuse leads to abusive practices. Because such misuse can facilitate exploitation, it is important to regulate these relationalities through control measures and regulations at both the organisational level and at that of private and personal relationships.

Examples of forms of social authority:

- A father has social authority over his son by virtue of age difference, the father's social-symbolic rank, and the fact that he is the family's main income-earner, which makes him part of a higher economic class at the household level.
- A doctor has social authority over his patients by virtue of academic attainment.
- A mother has symbolic social authority over her daughter by virtue of age difference and the mother's social rank, but she may not have economic authority because the father is the income-earner at the household level.
- A cleric possesses social authority by virtue of the symbolic social rank he enjoys in society.

Dominant racial and ethnic groups possess social authority through their influence on mainstream discourse in the media and their omnipresence in positions of authority.

Note: Social authority is often derived from society-built symbolic meanings, norms, and values.

Examples of exploitation that demonstrate abuse of social authority/power:

- A father forcing his young son to work or beg (child labour).
- A cleric takes advantage of his social status to get money, falsely claiming that it will be distributed to the poor.
- A professor using his position and social status to pressure a student to spend time with him.
- A doctor taking advantage of his patients by asking them for gifts in exchange for treatment.
- Racial and ethnic minorities of different nationalities being exploited as cheap labour.
- Women of certain races and ethnicities being described and stigmatised as “cheap.”

Different types of exploitation may arise through the misuse of social power, including sexual, emotional, and economic, as well as the exploitation of resources, and more.

Social power often provides perpetrators with impunity.

To limit the impunity that perpetrators often enjoy, we need to think about how to remove impunity from anyone, as none among us is infallible.

It is important to be aware of our social power and the authority we possess through it, in order to avoid misusing them.

5.2 Economic Power

In a world where the economic gap is growing and capital plays a fundamental role in our lives, we all have varying economic powers. For example, our economic power may exist in the workforce of which we may be a part, while that of others may lie in the property and capital they possess, or in the high wages they earn.

Sometimes economic power turns into authority.

Examples of types of economic authority:

- Investments give investors economic authority over their employees.
- Property ownership provides property-owners with economic authority over workers.
- Income generating activities can turn into economic authority at home that is exercised by the breadwinner over the rest of the family.
- Large organisations, especially those that provide grants to smaller ones, have economic authority over their partners.
- Trade unions have economic authority and bargaining power because they can influence policies and companies through strike decisions.

Economic power can be misused in many ways that can lead to exploitation.

This exploitation may be economic, material, or labour-related, and it may also result in any other form of exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying, even sexual.

Examples:

- The exploitation of people by landowners as cheap or forced labour by virtue of power stemming from property ownership.
- Business owners exploiting women's need to work and using them to attract clients or for sexual favours.
- Companies forming monopolies and exploiting difficult circumstances to raise the prices of basic materials.
- Exploiting refugees as cheap labour and limiting them to specific jobs.
- Exploiting women minors coming from poor families by marrying them off.

5.3 Political and Legal Power

Political power is our ability to have political influence. We do not consider this power to be limited to certain political classes, nor do we consider it to be monopolised by those holding decision-making positions at the state level. On the contrary, political action manifests in all of our practices of power.[3]

By virtue of proximity to traditional political systems, however, some of us have greater abilities to influence, cause harm, or offer assistance by way of these systems. For example, affiliation with a ruling political party gives a person powers of political influence, because the traditional political system will act in his or her favour.

We can think about legal power in a similar manner. In many cases, the law favours certain groups, especially in countries whose legal systems are characterised by discrimination and prejudice against certain other groups. The way we are positioned vis a vis the law in the place where we reside has a significant impact on the likelihood that we will be able to achieve justice in our favour.

Political and legal power sometimes transform into authority.

Examples of types of political and legal authority:

- Being affiliated with dominant political parties can allow a person to take a political position which, in turn, gives its holder authority.
- The popularity of a political activist gives them political authority and the ability to influence public opinion.
- Some citizens enjoy privileges and rights that give them authority through the right to vote and access to legal justice systems, while refugees and the stateless are deprived of these rights due to ethnicity, identity papers, or other differentiating factors.
- All holders of traditional political office hold authority over the rest of the population.
- Legal bias in favour of certain groups provides them with authority over others.
- Dominant political groups using the media to mislead public opinion and incite ethnic or racial conflict.

3. For more on political power, see CTDC's publication, "Political Participation from an Intersectional Feminist Perspective," available in Arabic at: https://bit.ly/3h2Ej1k

The abuse of political and legal power can take many forms that may lead to exploitation.

Examples:

- Legal bias in favour of citizens at the expense of immigrants, which allows them to escape punishment, especially for crimes committed against immigrants.
- Legal bias in favour of men enables them to abuse their power and authority over women, such as laws against libel and defamation that are used by people who practise harassment for impunity.
- Political office holders abusing their power to steal people's money.
- Men in political office who use their authority for sexual ends and to avoid consequences or punishment.

5.4 Emotional Power

Emotional power manifests in the ability to influence ourselves, others, and our surroundings. We consider this form of power to have two main sources:

1. Intrinsic power: the type of power that appears in personality, experience, charisma, knowledge-ability, talent, looks, way of speaking, and persuasive ability. This power may be acquired through education, learning, or one's surrounding environment, and it may come from within us. In many cases it may also be influenced by our positional, social, and symbolic power.
2. Intimate power: the type of power that is generated through the emotions and symbolic meanings that are cast onto feelings. This includes our feelings towards ourselves, such as our ability to love, respect, and appreciate ourselves; our feelings towards others; and the feelings of others towards us, all of which we can use to influence ourselves, others, or our surroundings. These feelings include love, appreciation, respect, hate, and more.

Examples of emotional power:

- Through her emotional power—which includes both her ability to persuade and her father's love for her— a girl may be able to challenge patriarchal norms by making unconventional choices that defy social expectations. Her father's love for her gives her authority that she can use to compel him to support her in her decisions.
- A trainer's charisma and ability to communicate information gives them authority that enables them to change the opinions of others.
- People we love generally have emotional power over us that allows them to influence our choices, decisions, and reactions.
- Feelings of respect towards clerics cause people to trust their ideas and opinions, thus giving them authority over society.
- Leaders of political movements possess emotional power that they obtain through the respect and love that people have for them.

Like all forms of power, emotional power can generate authority, and it can also be misused.

The abuse of emotional power comes in many forms and can lead to exploitation, harassment, bullying, and assault. In many cases, it may lead to the exploitation of others' emotional labour.

Examples:

- Using charisma to attract others in order to fill a void or obtain temporary emotional support, and deceiving them in what follows.
- One person exploiting another person who has love and respect for them in order to satisfy sexual urges without clarifying the nature of the relationship.
- Using the respect and love of others in order to avoid consequences or punishment.

Definition of Emotional Labour

Workplaces require emotional effort, just like our other daily relationships and interactions. Work in all its forms, whether physical or mental, requires emotional effort that usually goes unseen and unvalued. Some jobs require a lot of emotionality and emotional management. Paraphrasing from the book The Managed Heart by Arlie Hochschild; we may be required to manage our feelings and emotions, or to produce feelings and emotions. For example, a flight attendant is expected to be nicer than a tax collector, and a tax collector is expected to be curt. Most workplaces expect us to frequently exert mental and physical effort, and implicitly they also expect us to perform emotional labour.

5.5 Knowledge and Language as Power

Knowledge as power or intellectual power is a form of power we obtain by way of the knowledge that we possess. It can be divided into two types:

1. Public knowledge: includes the general accumulative knowledge that we obtain through everything we learn and know through life experience, professional and academic achievement, reading, discussion, and other means of knowledge production. This form of knowledge is not related to other people. Intellectual power can also include our knowledge of and familiarity with different languages, which gives us access to cultural and economic capital.
2. Private knowledge (information about people's affairs): includes matters that are concerned with the affairs of others, the details of their lives and relationships, and their private and intimate matters. This form of knowledge is usually gained through building trust and respect and relationships with others.

We have found that the abuse of linguistic power and the authority it bestows usually intersects with other manifestations of power, including emotional, economic, social, etc.

Examples of types of intellectual and linguistic authority:

- A professor has intellectual power that gives him authority in one way or another over his students.
- People who have knowledge about other groups of people have authority over them in one way or another because they know sensitive information. (Had the information not been sensitive, this knowledge would not have led to authority).
- An employee gains power in his organisation because his ability to speak English gives him the opportunity to communicate with donors.

Abuse of intellectual power is also possible and common, whether it is in breaches of privacy or in the malicious use of our accumulated public knowledge to do harm.

Examples:

- Using intimate images to blackmail women or non-normative individuals.
- Using information about people to blackmail them, threaten them, or cause them harm or damage.
- Using accumulated knowledge as a means of bullying and belittling certain people.
- Using legal knowledge to trap others or commit fraud.
- Exploitation of certain groups such as immigrants due to their poor knowledge of the law, e.g. immigration attorneys.
- Using a language unknown to others to exclude them from meetings and conversations.

5.6 Relational Power

Relational power is the power that people possess through their relationships. This power plays many roles in our lives on many levels. For example, our relationships may offer us emotional support, and our relationships may allow us to attain certain resources, positions, or goals.

Like all types of powers, relational power may lead to authority of a certain type, which may be over individuals or over organisations.

Some call this form of power social capital, due to the important role relationships play in our lives. Relational power intersects with other forms of power, and it may even generate different forms of power, or be produced by other types of power.

A person's emotional power may also help build relational power.

Positions we hold and jobs we work may also generate relationships that give us relational power.

Examples of types of relational authority:

- A person may be granted a particular position because of the relational power they possess through their family's relationship with people in authority.
- A local official derives his authority from his social power and the power of his relationships.
- Relationships with political office holders confer authority on those who do not have such positions.

Like all kinds of power, relational power can be used to cause harm or to offer support.

Examples:

- Using relationships to threaten others ("I'm friendly with the boss, so I can do whatever I want." i.e. a perpetrator using their relationships to threaten women who are vulnerable to harassment).
- A woman being hired because of her relationship with the boss despite more qualified people having applied for the position.
- Using relationships to threaten and intimidate, silence, abuse, or bully (online or in person).
- An employee using relationships with donors or partners to pressure an organisation to keep him despite his abusive practices.

5.7 Physical and Material Power

This type of power manifests in physical and tangible forms, either through our bodies or the power of material possessions. It can be understood as follows:

1. Physical power: the power that unfolds from our bodies, such as our skills and ability to change our physical environments, examples include lifting weights, playing the piano, and even moving something from one place to another.
2. The power of material possessions: this power includes the material possessions over which we have control, which could be anything from weapons, machines, buildings, and means of transportation, to certain tools such as sewing supplies, drawing implements, and more.

This form of power can also become authority, as we see often with those who have access to and own weapons.

People may use their physical skills to gain popularity or social status, which allows them to exploit, abuse, harass, or bully accordingly.

Examples of physical-material authority:

- Athletes gain social status because of their physical skills, which then gives them a certain kind of authority over others.
- The state can exercise authority over civilians through the power of arms and material property.

This power can be used to do harm, as well as to support, assist, and provide aid.

Examples of the exploitation of physical and material power:

- A person using his physical power to kill, harm, abuse, or assault another person.
- The state using weapons to suppress civilian demonstrators.
- The use of buildings and facilities to arrest, detain, or otherwise limit the freedom of movement of others (this could include a father confining his daughter to the home).

5.8 Power Based on Post, Position, and Title

Power based on post and title lies in the positions that people occupy, and it is usually bestowed by means of appointment. This could be in the form of a post or title, and it could be in the form of an honorary position, such as school prefects.

Positions give their holders authority over others or over specific resources.

Examples of forms of position-based authority:

- Managers have authority over employees and over the sources of their organisations' income.
- Party leaders have title-authority that enables them to control the direction of the party and its followers.
- Prefects have the privileged position of reporting the behaviours of their peers.

Like all kinds of power, position-based power can be abused and used to do harm, or it can be used for the purposes of care and aid.

Examples:

- A manager uses her title to bully her colleagues, or to cover up abusive practices that occur in her organisation.
- A party leader uses his position to pressure his followers into sex.
- A manager uses her office to embezzle funds and tamper with financial controls.

There are other forms of power that we did not include in this toolkit, as we tried to focus specifically on those that we found are active in organisational work dynamics.

5.9 Analysing Power: Examples

In the previous sections we reviewed different forms of power that have affective roles in one way or another in the workplace and in our daily lives. It is important to address these categories, especially in safeguarding frameworks and when responding to exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying. In what follows, we offer some practical examples in the form of questions and exercises through which we analyse power in specific scenarios and discuss how different forms of power intersect with one another. It is worth noting here that in most cases we cannot analyse power while considering any one form separate from any other. So often, different forms of power cut across and through one another, one supporting the other. It is important to think about the intersectionality of types of power in order to identify and address the root of a problem instead of treating its symptoms. Abusive practices are all symptoms of larger and deeper problems that are rooted in oppressive systems, and which manifest themselves in organisations and initiatives. Analysing power also helps us to understand human elements and experiences in a more holistic manner while taking several factors into account. Organisations usually overlook these experiences when responding to exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying. For example, organisations sometimes treat titled-based power as the ultimate power, without addressing other elements such as emotional power. For example, we found that managers are vulnerable to abusive practices by their employees due to the latter's knowledge and their emotional and social power, among other forms. In the following subsections, we review scenarios that reflect these complexities.

5.9.1 Story 1

Souad is a twenty-five-year-old woman who recently started her career in a job that her father secured for her through his connections. Souad's father is a well-known, wealthy man who runs several media companies.

Ramzi is a middle-class man in his forties who worked hard as a young man to attain a managerial position at a media organisation. He has fulfilled most of his professional ambitions, but he is single because work has dominated his life in recent years.

Souad became an editor at the same organisation that was headed by Ramzi.

During the first few months of her job, Souad begins to like Ramzi and express admiration for his work.

After several months, Souad shares her feelings with Ramzi and expresses her desire to date him.

Ramzi is very happy, but hesitates because company policies prevent relationships between a manager and other employees. He turns her down.

With time, however, Ramzi's feelings for Souad develop further, and he expresses this to her. He suggests they inform the HR department of their plans in order to reach an appropriate solution.

Souad refuses, insisting that they can date and that in the event of a problem, her father will use his influence to put pressure on the organisation's board of directors.

Ramzi accepts that solution and they date in secret.

While Souad and Ramzi are out on a romantic dinner, one of their colleagues sees them and reports them to HR.

Questions:

- If you were in charge of HR, what procedures could be taken to respond to a complaint?
- How can you analyse the forms of power possessed by Souad?
- How can you analyse the forms of power that Ramzi has?
- Are there any forms of abusive practices present in this scenario, be it exploitation or assault? If yes, what are they?

5.9.2 Story 2

A human rights organisation has eighteen women employees and five male employees. Every year at least five of its employees are replaced, especially the women.

Hamed has been an employee at the organisation since its inception ten years ago. He is responsible for relations with implementing partners on the ground.

Jumana has also been an employee in the organisation since its inception. She is responsible for donor-relations.

Jihan is the youngest employee who works as an administrative assistant to both Hamed and Jumana.
Rima is the organisation's executive director and has held her position for the last five years.

Rima relies a lot on Jumana and Hamed. She believes that without them she would not be able to manage the organisation or implement projects.

Hamed and Jumana depend a lot on Jihan, and Jihan feels she is drowning in work.

When she was first hired, Jihan was full of energy but her performance has begun to deteriorate.

When Jihan writes a project report, Jumana presents it to Rima (the executive director) as though it were her work.

When a problem arises with the partners, Hamed blames Jihan's failure to communicate.

The executive director thinks Jihan is falling short in her work.

Jihan feels her work is unappreciated.

Jihan decides to complain to the executive director about the working conditions, and explains the reasons for her lack of enthusiasm.

Rima reassures Jihan that she will take action.

Rima calls Jumana and Hamed to alert them about their mistreatment of Jihan. She tells them that Jihan made a complaint about her working conditions.

After this incident, Jihan begins to feel job insecure.

Questions:

- How can you analyse the forms of power that Jumana, Hamed, Rima, and Jihan have?
- Can you find any abusive practices in the story? If yes, what are they?
- What forms of authority do Hamed, Jumana, Rima and Jihan have?

5.9.3 Story 3

A feminist organisation usually employs women. There are some men, but very few.

Fouad is a new employee in the organisation with a passion for feminism who reads feminist theory avidly.

He understands feminism as a movement that seeks social justice for all.

Nihad is a long-time employee of the organisation who holds a senior position. She also has a passion for feminism and understands it as the pursuit of women's rights. For her, the priority of the feminist agenda is women's rights.

Fouad and Nihad differ greatly in their style and way of working.

At the end of each meeting, Fouad says nothing after Nihad tells him, "what do you know about feminism?"

Fouad feels silenced.

Questions:

- What are the power dynamics present between Fouad and Nihad?
- Can you find any abusive practices in the story? If yes, what are they?
- Does power differ according to where we are? How can we discern that from this example?

5.9.4 Story 4

Dima and Inshirah both work in the same organisation, but they come from different backgrounds.

The organisation sends Dima and Inshirah to be trained by a well-known trainer in another city.

On the first day of training, the trainer arranges a group dinner, and Dima is not sure if she wants to go because she does not like staying up too late.

Inshirah insists, saying, “do you not want to stay out because your environment does not allow you to? Or because you like propriety?

Dima feels pressured and determined to go to dinner with the group, just to avoid feeling different.

The next day, Dima feels distress and discomfort as she notices sexual looks from the trainer.

Dima is hesitant to share her distress with anyone.

On the third day, Dima decides to share her feelings with Inshirah because she thinks the trainer has started trying to get close to her.

Inshirah answers her; “I don’t think he’s harassing you. First of all, lots of women would like him, and second, I don’t think he cares about trainees. Third, I really doubt that he likes you because he’s out of your league, and fourth, don’t you think you’re a bit too conservative? Be flexible, enjoy your life a little. We only live once. I assure you, everything you believe in is rubbish.”

Questions:

- What power dynamics are involved in this story?
- Can you find any abusive practices in the story? If yes, what are they?

5.9.5 Story 5

Moaz and Ali work for an organisation that provides financial and in-kind assistance to the families of martyrs, the poor, and the needy.

To assess the conditions of beneficiaries, Ali and Moaz make field visits to their homes.

During these visits, Moaz and Ali ask beneficiaries about their needs and living conditions.

Moaz and Ali always try to meet every household member.

On one of these field visits, Ali and Moaz meet the eldest daughter of a martyr, a sixteen-year-old girl.

As usual, they ask her some questions and she expresses her desire for education.

Moaz gets excited and offers to give her free private English lessons.

Moaz starts visiting the household after work.

Two months later, Moaz tells Ali that he intends to get engaged to her.

Questions:

- What are the power dynamics involved in this story?
- Can you find any abusive practices in the story? If yes, what are they?

How can we reduce the possibility of exploitation in organisations?

- Promote an alternative culture that challenges hierarchies of power and discrimination in all of it forms.
- Address underlying and implicit biases and spread a culture of emotional responsibility.
- Clarify the boundaries, responsibilities, and best methods for dealing with relationships at all levels of the organisation.
- Pursue fairness as much as possible with everyone, regardless of rank and social status.

Important note:
We must include an analysis of power in each practical step we take when building organisational accountability or safeguarding systems.

6 Accountability Frameworks

One of the major flaws of traditional safeguarding systems within organisations is that they focus on sexually abusive practices and neglect other practices that may be the main reasons for a workplace being conducive to exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination. For this reason, we seek here to provide practical tools that help organisations, initiatives, and groups to develop their own policies and procedures for public accountability frameworks that aim to limit opportunities for abuse and end organisational impunity for perpetrators, regardless of their backgrounds or titles. We found a significant correlation between accountability frameworks, even those related to financial affairs, and the likelihood of exploitation, assault, or sexual harassment. For example, the discovery of financial corruption usually reveals other abusive practices within the organisation such as threats, intimidation, and the misuse of titles and positions. The practical tools presented here are meant to help organisations build accountability frameworks in a way that suits their needs and takes structural sensitivity into account. Accountability frameworks are often thought of as part of the MEAL framework (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning), which limits them to only one aspect of an organisation's work. In this toolkit, however, we take accountability to be a general framework that requires mainstreaming at all levels, be they internal, external, or in between; this includes relationships and hierarchies of power, as well as programs, procedures, and workflow.

The following sections aim to:

- Provide an alternate perspective on organisational accountability frameworks based on the principles of governance and feminist leadership.
- Link safeguarding systems to public accountability frameworks within organisations.
- Enable organisations to improve accountability frameworks at all levels; internal, external, and in between.
- Enable organisations to develop their own strategies using structural sensitivity.
- Enable organisations to develop holistic accountability frameworks that include safeguarding from exploitation, sexual assault, and sexual harassment as an integral component.

The following advice and guidance for organisations is based on four types of analysis:

1. Transforming the concept of leadership,
2. Analysing relationships,
3. Analysing gaps in workflow,
4. Analysing and understanding power.

6.1 Leadership as Accountability

Throughout our research we noticed that most organisations use corporate management practices that focus on productivity and output, and which often constitute an obstacle to safeguarding. One of the core principles of traditional and alternative safeguarding systems is a desire for and commitment to safeguarding on behalf of the management, which requires leadership skills based on feminist accountability.

Examples of Poor Management

- Failure to deal with the actions of an employee who is bullying others because she is able to raise money for the organisation.
- Failure to deal with harassment within the organisation because the aggressor performs his duties to the fullest, delivering on time and in line with his job description.
- Failure to deal with abusive practices such as bullying and the appropriation of others' labour because the perpetrator is the only employee who can speak English and communicate with funders.

In this section, we review the concepts of leadership and management from the perspective of accountability as an alternative to poor management and as a modus operandi for organisations and initiatives concerned with social justice. We have noticed a problem with the concept of leadership as it is typically used; supervisors and administrators should not be considered leaders only because they hold managerial positions. Leadership depends on understanding hierarchies of power, reshaping them, and redistributing power so as to limit the possibility of abuse. Management, on the other hand, is usually centred around hierarchies of power and consolidates them as opposed to challenging them.

Leadership as accountability:

Leadership is a continuous process, not a trait that a person or position-holder possesses. Leadership stems from our political awareness and ability to identify and name structures of oppression and injustice. Leadership is exercised through this awareness, which drives our work and our endeavours to create inclusive societies that are ruled by concepts of justice and equity. In this view, leadership works to undermine the affective impact of any disparities between people, be they linked to gender, age, race, social class, physical and mental ability, position and title, or other factors. Leadership as accountability also depends on our awareness of the forms of power available to us, and of the positionalities of ourselves and others vis-á-vis hierarchies of power.

Core-Practices of Leadership as Accountability

Openness to learning:

The practice of leadership as accountability requires us to be open to learning and to see problems as learning opportunities. To do this, we must deal with criticism positively, see issues with interest and curiosity, respond to problems, and practice sensitivity to both structures and other people.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Undervaluing different perspectives and constructive criticism, and regarding them as existential or unrealistic questions that hinder the flow of work.
- Seeing problems and conflict as an additional burden and not as learning opportunities.

Diversity and Inclusivity:

Practising leadership as accountability requires us to celebrate difference as a source of learning and knowledge. We must not limit our understanding of power differences within organisations only to rank and title. Rather, we must account for the different forms of power that we possess, which may be emotional, relational, or based on positionality, job, or title.

Reminder: It is important to address and understand disparities in power at every stage.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Regarding the opinions of younger or less experienced people as marginal and irrelevant to the workflow.
- Authoritarianism in decision-making and in the distribution of power, authority, and responsibilities.
- Not employing people from marginalised groups.
- Not paying attention to the affective impact, which can be significant, of what we say on those whose positionalities are affected by our own.

Collaboration and Networking:

Exercising leadership as accountability requires us to cultivate a spirit of cooperation and solidarity both within an organisation's personnel and with other organisations, individuals, and actors concerned with social justice. To do this we need openness, communication, transparency, and efforts to build consensus about the basic principles of justice.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Favouring some individuals at the expense of others.
- Competition for funding between organisations instead of opportunities for joint collaboration.
- Concealing and monopolising financial and intellectual resources.
- Treating networking and mutual learning opportunities to be a waste of time and making people feel like they have nothing new to add.

Clear Vision:

Exercising leadership as accountability requires us to have clarity in our vision and mission that is linked to economic, social, and political analysis, as well as to the intellectual and ideological lenses through which we understand context and address the problems we need to solve in order to reach comprehensive social justice.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Lack of clear vision or mission for employees.
- The vision for the work being disconnected from the real needs of the groups we seek to serve.
- An organisation's vision being based on the ideas, aspirations, and agendas of donors.
- Carrying-out activities and events that are incompatible with the organisation's main vision.

Openness and Communication:

Exercising leadership as accountability requires us to be passionate about and committed to individuals and society, and to be open to different points of view. Openness must be treated as a literal and moral value in the service of which we must call for transparency, forgiveness, and the opening of hearts and minds for change. It also requires us to be able to listen carefully; show concern, acceptance, empathy, steadiness, and reliability; and to encourage self-evaluation.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- A lack of participation in how policies or decisions are made in an organisation on behalf of its team.
- Not listening to the opinions of others or listening with indifference.
- Failure to address complaints and feedback.
- Considering our viewpoints and experiences to be better and more important than those of others.

Addressing Contentions and Disagreements:

Exercising leadership as accountability requires us to deal with conflict, contradictions, and difficult subjects, all of which is key to finding creative and appropriate solutions for all. In order to do this, we have to address topics that are sensitive and challenging to talk about. Failure to address these difficult topics can cause communication between the concerned parties to deteriorate, lead to conspiracy theories, and reduce the individual efficacy in society. Disputes within organisations that are not dealt with also affect external parties.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Covering up and concealing issues related to harassment, exploitation, or sexual assault, and explaining them away as failures to conform to "the organisation's culture."
- Silencing the disputes between employees and dismissing them as marginal and unimportant.

Decentralising Authority:

Leadership as accountability requires us to be aware of the importance of distributing and decentralizing power and decision-making authority. In order to do this, we must think of alternative management methods that are not centred around a single person, as concentrations of power within organisations make room for abusive practices. This alternative form of management must include new methods of supervision, seek to create a sense of job security, and avoid any kind of pressure or psychological violence that we may consciously or unconsciously enact on others. One example of how to avoid centralised authority is rotating leadership.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Spreading rumours about people or insulting them in speech or action.
- Marginalisation.
- Differential treatment.
- Authoritarianism through surveillance, supervision, or any other abuse of power.
- Lack of positive recognition of the team's work, knowledge, or efforts.
- Making the team feel that they are falling short, whether by overburdening them with tasks or through constant criticism.

Building Relationships Based on Trust and Devotion:

In order to practise leadership as accountability we must build internal and external relationships centred around trust and devotion to issues of social justice. This requires us to respect and consider valuable all opinions, as there is no such thing as a stupid idea or opinion; to be aware of the feelings of those around us, including those that go unexpressed or unspoken; and to show sensitivity to others' psychological needs. It also requires clear communication and that we encourage trust, cooperation, respect, and generosity in the sharing of knowledge and information.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Collective penalties on a group of workers for the misconduct of one.
- Lack of transparency in hiring.
- The general mistreatment of others, either in not listening, cursing, sarcasm, or mockery.
- Failure to meet the basic needs of personnel, such as job security.
- Evaluating and giving feedback to workers in a way that condescends to them or belittles their knowledge and intellectual capabilities.

Avoiding Blame Culture:

Practising leadership requires us to promote a culture of accountability within the organisation. Such a culture urges us not to consider problems, damage, or harm as individual or personal problems, and to include people as part of the solution. Responsibilities resulting from mistakes are thus shared by all team members rather than placed on one person who is punished. This requires us to acknowledge mistakes as part of an ongoing learning process, and to focus on root causes and how to avoid problems in the future.

Examples of abusive leadership and management practices:

- Casting blame for failure solely on the project manager.
- Punishing an individual for mistakes that stem from flawed processes and procedures.
- Focusing on punishing individuals or groups for their mistakes, rather than addressing root problems.
- Considering mistakes made in work environments to be bad for individuals' career paths.

6.2 Relationships: Analysis and Management

Society is made up of networks of relationships. Organisations, in turn, are also based on networks of relationships in their structures and work.

Relationship analysis can help us to build organisational accountability frameworks, as relationships are an integral part of any organisation's operations. It is through relationships that the abuses of power, violence, and other abusive practices can occur.

Organisational accountability frameworks are concerned with managing and regulating relationships through policies, processes, procedures and practices.

The following is a first step towards analysing organisational relationships, wherein we include practical suggestions and tools to help organise relationships.

Definition of personnel:

The term personnel in this toolkit includes all staff members, including permanent employees, contract workers, consultants, volunteers, and members of the board of directors.

6.2.1 Relational Analysis

The questions in this section deal with organisational relationships between various parties, and they are meant to help us think about how to manage and regulate these relationships. Answering these questions allows us to define the social processes that organisations are involved in on several levels.

Reminder:
It is important to pay attention to disparities in power when analysing relationships that we wish to manage and regulate.

The Organisation and the General Community

What is the larger society in relation to the organisation? Who is the target group of the organisation's work? How can the broader community hold the organisation accountable? How does the organisation communicate with the community? How does the wider community contribute to the development of strategies, activities, programs, and projects? Does the organisation respond to society's changing needs? How does the organisation ensure that it does not cause harm or do damage in the society? Can the general community complain about the organisation's work? How? What are the procedures to be followed? Does the general community know the organisation's vision, mission, goals, and programs? Does the organisation provide the general community with periodic financial and narrative reports? Are the organisation's policies available to the wider community?

The Organisation and its Partners

How are partners chosen? Who are the organisation's partners (partner organisations, networks, companies, activists)? What is the nature of the corporation's relationship with its partners? Are there contracts and memoranda of understanding that organise and clarify the nature and limitations of relationships with partnering agencies? Are there mechanisms available for voicing complaints about partners? For partners to file complaints? How does the organisation communicate with partners? What kind of accountability process exists between the organisation and partners?

The Organisation and its Donors

Are there contracts or memoranda of understanding that regulate relationships with donors? How and with what limits do the donors influence in the formation of the organisation's programs, activities, and strategies? Are there mechanisms for making complaints about donors? What is the method of communicating with the donors? What is the nature of the accountability process that exists between the organisation and donors? What are the procedures for negotiating with donors?

The Organisation and its Beneficiaries

Who are the beneficiaries? Does the organisation serve any vulnerable groups? What are the selection criteria? How is the relationship with the beneficiaries organised and regulated? Does the organisation meet the needs of the beneficiaries by involving them in the design of its activities, events, and programs? Can beneficiaries file complaints about the organisation's work, policies, procedures, or channels for reporting abusive practices that may occur internally? Do the beneficiaries know the vision, mission, goals, and programs of the organisation? What is the nature and quality of communication between the organisation and its beneficiaries?

The Organisation and the State

What is the nature of the organisation's relationship with the state? In what manner does the organisation deal with the state? Are there official records? Is the work of the organisation in contradiction, at odds, with the policies of the country in which it operates? Which state laws constitute general obstacles to the organisation's work? Which state laws facilitate the work of the organisation in general? What are the laws, facilities, and services of the state that may provide protection for the organisation in the event it encounters abusive practices, and what are the laws that hinder that? Does the state provide any kind of protection from sexual and non-sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, and harassment? What is the nature of the relationship of state agencies with personnel?

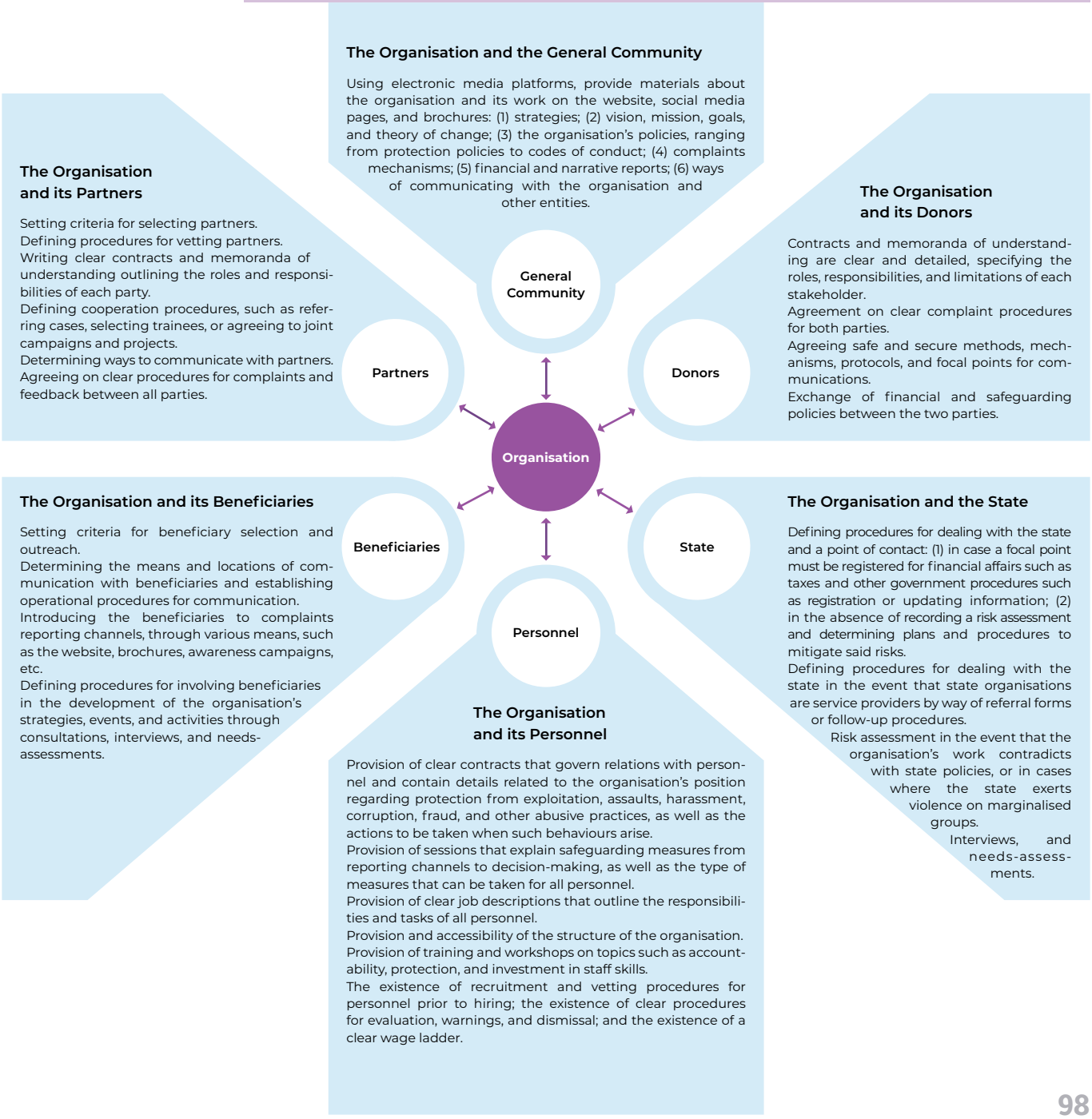
The Organisation and its Personnel

Are relationships with personnel organised through contracts? Are contracts sensitive to the different conditions of personnel's lives, such as identification papers and care roles? Does the organisation provide space for independence and participation in decision-making? Do personnel know how the organisation formulates its vision, mission, goals, and programs? Does the organisation provide its personnel with space for their proposed initiatives and innovation? Does the organisation create space for feedback to be provided both to and from personnel? Are all staff members informed about all aspects of the organisation's work? Does the organisation provide support to its personnel in difficult circumstances? Does the organisation cater to different personnel needs such as special physical needs or flexible working hours? Does the organisation provide space for personnel's personal and professional development? Do all staff members know the importance of their roles in the organisation? Do all staff members know all their duties in and responsibilities to the organisation? Are there complaint mechanisms for personnel at all levels? Are personnel allowed to assess and provide feedback to their direct managers?

6.2.2 Managing Relationships and Processes

After identifying an organisation's social relationships and processes, it is crucial to think about different ways to manage them so as to limit the abuse of authority or power. This section presents some examples and suggestions for ways to manage these relationships. These suggestions are not meant to suit all organisations, but to provide case-examples that we came across while conducting research for this toolkit.

Reminder: It is important to pay attention to power disparities when managing relationships and processes.



6.2.3 Standard Operational Procedures

While organisational policies often take preventive measures to safeguard against exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, bullying and other abusive practices, the policies themselves need standard operational procedures for their application. For example, an organisation's policies may specify the protection of complainant anonymity to ensure their implementation, but this policy must also be accompanied by protocols that clarify the process for how to deal with personal information.

For example, a complaints-box may require standard operational procedures that determine who can open and sort through the box, how it is transferred or emptied, and how to classify complaints, etc.

Simplified template for service provider vetting procedures

This is a simplified template for operating controls and procedures. Each of its points and the procedures surrounding it can be further elaborated upon and developed.

Standard operational Procedures (SOPs) for Vetting Service Providers and Partners

SOPs are designed to provide precise and detailed instructions on how to implement specific processes and procedures and ensure that certain work-standards are maintained.

The operating procedures that govern partner vetting processes are concerned with determining the criteria for selecting partners and verifying the credibility, professionalism, integrity, and quality of their work.

Number	Procedure	Person Responsible
1	Nominating partners to work with in order to expand the scope of the organisation's work (using a nomination form)	All Personnel
2	Verifying that the partners' work is in line with that of the organisation	Program Manager and Safeguarding Official
3	Providing a short-list of potential partners who are compatible with the organisation's vision and goals	Program Manager
4	Verifying the integrity, quality, professionalism, and credibility of short-listed organisations	Contact-point with the partner

Partner Vetting Form	
Nomination source:	Name and job title
Person in charge of vetting:	Contact-point with the partner
Vetting method:	Interviews, phone-calls, materials and publications, social media
Name of the organisation:	
• Area of work:	Development, human rights, women's affairs, capacity-building, etc.
• Services:	Psychological support / medical services / legal support, etc.
• Head of the organisation and contact information:	
• Contact-point and method of communication:	
• Main address (headquarters):	
• Branch addresses:	
• Online contact:	
• Terms of service provision:	• specific group of people (e.g. people with special needs) • paid services • specific age group
• Referral procedures:	
• Funding sources:	
• Work-languages:	
Quality of Services	
Does the organisation provide direct services?	
• If yes, what are they?	
Qualifications of those responsible for direct services:	
Groups served by the organisation:	

Does the nature of their services accord with our organisation's principles?	
Does the organisation have monitoring and evaluation reports?	
Does the organisation assess beneficiary-satisfaction?	
Policies	
What policies does the organisation have available?	
• Anti-discrimination policy	
• Safeguarding policies to protect against exploitation, assault, and sexual harassment	
• Privacy policy	
What complaint mechanisms does the organisation have?	
Hiring policies and standards	
Security	
Security at the organisation's headquarters	
Is the organisation registered?	
Organisation's accessibility	
Information management systems	
Officer's Observations	
Does the organisation satisfy the basic criteria for suitable partners?	
What criteria should the organisation work on developing?	
Recommendations:	☐ Collaboration recommended. ☐ Collaboration not recommended. ☐ Collaboration recommended, provided that basic criteria are met (suggestions for how to work on developing them together)
Organisation's accessibility	

Follow-up procedures		
Number	Procedure	Person Responsible
5	Information storage and record-keep	Vetting Officer
6	Sending recommendations to program director and safeguarding officers	Vetting Officer
7	Approving the recommendation	Safeguarding Officers
8	Sending approved recommendations communication officers	Vetting Officer
9	Contact organisation to discuss the partnership	Communication Officers
10	Preparing contracts or memoranda of understanding	Legal Department / Human Resources
11	Determining means of communication	Communication Officers
12	Signing contracts or memoranda of understanding	Executive Management

6.3 Additional Suggestions

In the previous section we outlined a methodology for developing accountability frameworks that would enable us to build and implement OSSs. In this section, we present a few noteworthy suggestions that must be addressed in accountability frameworks.

6.3.1 Board of Directors

While initiatives and organisations differ in structure, membership, and governance, it is important to have a somewhat separate body that is not involved in the organisation's or initiative's daily work, and which supervises and ensures its commitment to its principles and vision, as well as its ethical and financial compliance. This could be a committee, board, or other body that is independent or made up of volunteer consultants. It is also feasible that some members of the initiative are nominated or elected to form a committee that provides a vital point of contact in matters of safeguarding, complaints, and other aspects of the work.

There are many ways to select board members. The board may be made up of founders, for instance. In cases where organisations and initiatives need to select a board of directors, we recommend the following:

1. **By Nomination:** Allowing team members to nominate people to the board promotes a culture of participation in the organisation and nourishes a sense of belonging and representation. We encourage the engagement of personnel in the nomination process for a board or advisory committee, as it helps ameliorate the negative effects of abuse and hierarchies of power, and limits the likelihood of the abuse of power by executive directors.
2. **Through an Open Call:** Some organisations issue open calls to join the board in the form of vacancy announcements within the organisation, which opens the door to all for this position. After the open call, applications must be reviewed and evaluated according to merit and competence. Priority should be given to those who have experience or skills that are lacking in the organisation or initiative. After

the initial selection process, it is recommended that applicants undergo several interviews that correspond to different administrative levels in the organisation. These may include interviews with: (1) current board members, (2) senior management, (3) administrative personnel, and (4) employees in middle management positions.

The role of the board

The job description of the board is no less important than that of other employees. The board usually provides general supervision of the organisation and accountability to the executive staff. However, the board should not be restricted to dealing only with executive directors, as their integration and interaction with the rest of the personnel is very important in providing accountability and safeguarding frameworks.

The job description of board members must include the following points:

- Their role in terms of safeguarding and receiving internal and external complaints.
- The extent and limits of the board's participation in decision-making. This may include decisions related to applying for funding, approving annual budgets, auditing accounts, or reviewing employee evaluations.
- The skills or expertise each member of the board provides to the organisation.
- The number of hours per month required of each member.
- The number of annual meetings between the board and the team, preferably not less than one meeting every six months.
- The number of annual meetings between the board members themselves, preferably not less than four meetings a year.
- The number of one-on-one meetings between the board and personnel.

6.3.2 Recruitment Processes

It is crucial that processes of recruitment (or expansion for those that are membership-based) in organisations and initiatives be clear, transparent, and follow clear procedures that are public knowledge.

Organisational accountability frameworks must contain controls and procedures for recruitment or expansion that cover all elements of the recruitment process, including:

1. **Advertising Jobs and Membership Openings:**

- Contains clear job descriptions.
- Contains the organisation's vision, mission, and objectives.
- Stipulates the organisation's commitment to the principles of justice, including combating discrimination, confronting violence, and safeguarding against exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and more.
- Includes recruitment procedures, the expected timeline for short-listing, the expected dates of interviews and final decisions, and the methods used to vet the applicants.
- Contains an item related to privacy and the security of information contained in the applications.
- Clarifies selection criteria and applicant qualifications including competencies and experience.

2. **Submitting Applications:**

- Uses a safe method that ensures the security of applicants' information.
- Has clear and easy submission procedures that are sensitive to different needs.

3. **Reviewing Applications and Short-Listing:**

- Is fair and takes different physical and mental capabilities into account.
- Selection is made by a committee of more than two people from various professional and occupational backgrounds.
- Is inclusive and strives to represent different community groups.
- Is free from explicit and implicit biases and adheres to the principle of equal opportunity.

4. **Interviewing:**

- Is not based on interrogative methods that place applicants under extreme scrutiny.
- Clarifies the expectations of the recruitment process and the organisation's obligations.
- Is conducted by employees from senior, middle, and assistant managerial positions who have awareness and understanding about positionalities.
- Provides room for applicant questions and inquiries.

5. **Vetting Applicants:**

- Is carried out with the knowledge of the applicants.
- Uses several methods of verification, such as recommendations, internet research, asking social acquaintances, and more.
- Verifies required technical skills and various social behaviours.
- Verifies the credibility of academic, vocational, and other certifications.

6. **Selection Process:**

- Is done through consultations between the different personnel.
- Is inclusive, fair, and free from explicit and implicit biases, and adheres to the principle of equal opportunity.
- Is carried-out in accordance with the required standards for the job, as specified in the job advertisement.
- Is transparent such that it is easy to provide reasons why an applicant was not selected.

6.3.3 Managing Human Resources

Organisations vary in the way they relate to their human resources and the levels of their personnel's involvement in the work. Organisations can have permanent and contractual employees, consultants, volunteers, cleaning staff, security guards, and board members. Despite these differences, we believe it is extremely important that an organisation's various policies be uniform and applicable to all in the same way and to the same degree.

It is important to note here that although we try to present best practices in this toolkit, we are aware of the financial challenges facing organisations in this regard. Thus, we emphasise that policy development should be considered a long-term process and commitment. It can be invested in when time and budget allow, but it should be thought of as a long-term project and investment. Even when developing these policies, they must be constantly reviewed, amended, and updated in order to align with organisations' different needs and sizes.

Essential Safeguarding Policies:

- Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding and CRMs.
- Policies for Whistleblowing and Protection Against Retaliation.
- Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policies.
- Conflict of Interest Policies.
- Anti-Corruption, Bribery, and Fraud Policies.
- Privacy and Data Protection Policies.
- Pay and Salary Scales.
- Outreach and Communication Policies.
- Social Media Policies.

Introducing all Personnel to Policies:

All personnel, regardless of their titles or involvement, must be familiarised with the organisation's policies. This can be done in the form of workshops or sessions, or through informational videos, for example. It is important that this introduction to the policies include the following basic principles:

- The organisation's culture and position on exploitation, harassment, and sexual abuse.
- The organisation's policies regarding personnel's rights and duties, and unacceptable behaviours in the workplace.

- Definitions of abusive practices such as violence, harassment, bullying, exploitation, bullying, and assault.
- All CRMs and procedures for sensitive and non-sensitive complaints.
- Trainings and workshops about emotional responsibility, communication skills, accountability, diversity, inclusivity, and more. This can also be done informally through knowledge-sharing, dialogue, and open communication between the team members themselves.

Contracts and Written Agreements

Contracts and written agreements are the main resource for organising relationships with personnel, including contract employees, consultants, volunteers, cleaning staff, security guards, advisors, and board members. Despite personnel's differing legal relationships with the organisation, there are common clauses that should be agreed upon as part of contracts and written commitments. These include:

- Acknowledgment by personnel of having read and understood all organisation policies.
- Attaching the organisation's policies and procedures as appendices.
- A list of corrective actions and consequences for abusive practices that are endorsed by government and official bodies concerned with labour rights and laws, in order to protect the organisation from future legal liability.
- A clause that gives the organisation the right to share the results of complaint-investigations with other organisations if need be.
- Specifying the organisation's obligations to protect personnel.

Temporary Contracts

Consultants, contract-employees, and advisors are among the workers who are most vulnerable to job insecurity and bullying and lack adequate support. While it may be difficult to provide them with legal or economic protection, organisations can improve their working conditions through ethical commitments. These may include safeguarding against abusive practices; giving at least two-months' notice before terminating a contract; creating space for care-work; or providing opportunities for career development, education, and work.

7 Complaints Response Mechanisms

In previous chapters, we focused on definitions of abusive practices, as well as on how to analyse hierarchies of power in a manner that helps us build accountability frameworks, and in the same vein, helps us to analyse the different forms of power that surround the occurrence of similar practices. We also discussed how to build integrated accountability frameworks within organisations and initiatives. In this chapter, we look at how to design mechanisms for receiving and dealing with complaints using an intersectional feminist perspective. We also review the basic procedures and principles that organisations should have in place for responding to complaints, specifically those that are sensitive.

In developing this chapter, we rely on intersectionality as a methodology and focus on the importance of these mechanisms being formulated in a participatory manner that accounts for the intersectionality of experiences. This allows for the creation of CRMs that are sensitive to differences of sex, class, gender, physical and mental capabilities, language, etc, that exist between us. We must always strive to build CRMs from the point of view of those most marginalised.

The following sections aim to:

- Provide tools and techniques that conform to basic standards and principles of safeguarding for organisations and initiatives to develop mechanisms to receive complaints.
- Provide tools and techniques for organisations and initiatives to develop procedures and mechanisms that deal with different forms of complaints.
- Provide tools and techniques to help organisations and initiatives develop templates for filing complaints and identifying risks.
- Provide tools and techniques to help organisations develop safe channels for referral and assistance.
- Provide tools and techniques to assist organisations in investigations and in developing corrective actions.

7.1 Core Standards for CRMs

In this section, we discuss the main criteria that must be met in order to build quality CRMs in organisations and initiatives.

The following is an outline of the basic standards that must be adhered to when implementing and developing CRMs.

Responsiveness and Accessibility:

Reporting channels should be able to respond to our various needs, whether they arise due to gender, sex, education, special physical and mental needs, or something else. For example, we must consider how to adapt response channels to suit the needs of those with impaired hearing or vision, the illiterate, people who lack access to electronic communication devices, people with limited mobility or learning difficulties, and other groups that find it difficult to access CRMs.

- This could mean providing audio-visual materials that clarify reporting channels.
- This could mean providing brochures and carrying out awareness-raising campaigns about reporting channels.
- This could mean developing materials in Braille or in sign language.
- This could mean developing materials that accommodate people with special needs.

A reporting mechanism can be deemed accessible if the largest possible number of people and groups can access and use it. People should be encouraged to use it, which means making it easy to use, among other things.

Security, Safety and Protection:

Secure reporting mechanisms address potential risks and dangers for all parties and include means for protection against harm. This includes ensuring confidentiality and physical protection when needed and wherever possible, in addition to protection against retaliation. Safeguarding mechanisms must adhere to the “do no harm” principle, both for survivors and for society at large. Security and protection include providing referral pathways to service providers and assisting them according to their needs and desires.

- This could mean analysing risks to the broader community and indirect stakeholders.
- This could mean vetting service provider competencies and safeguarding systems.
- This could mean actions at the organisational level, such as transferring complainants to another department or providing paid leave.

Reporting mechanisms are secure and provide protection if (1) they are careful not to cause harm to anyone, (2) they are able to provide adequate support and take actions satisfactory to the victim, and (3) they contain clear and secure procedures and standards.

Transparency and Predictability:

Reporting mechanisms are transparent when community members know that they exist in the first place, contribute to its development, and have sufficient information on how to access and use it. One of the main obstacles that prevents victims from filing complaints is their inability to predict the various procedures, steps, and outcomes that will occur during the response process. It is important that procedures be predictable. This is part and parcel of the principles of transparency at work.

- This could mean being transparent with victims and perpetrators in terms of steps and procedures.
- This could mean providing a timeline in safeguarding policies that sets a deadline for handling complaints.
- This could mean providing examples of how the organisation has dealt with past complaints.

It should be noted here that transparency does not mean advertising and publicizing the steps being followed in specific cases, but rather transparency of the procedures themselves. Privacy is a basic criterion that must be ensured in reporting mechanisms.

Privacy:

Preserving privacy is an ethical principle that limits the spread of information. Investigations of exploitation, abuse, and harassment require us to limit the spread of information beyond those authorised to conduct

the investigation. Preserving privacy helps create an environment in which witnesses feel safe to share their version of events. This is extremely important in the context of safeguarding from sexual exploitation and abuse, because preserving whistle-blowers' and survivors' anonymity is one of the most basic steps towards providing protection.

- This could mean that complainants remain nameless.
- This could mean that witnesses remain nameless.
- This could mean dealing with all procedures with the highest degree of confidentiality, according to the wishes of the whistle-blower or victim.
- This could mean developing secure information protocols and procedures to ensure privacy.

Attention to Affect:

Awareness of and attention to affect and impact on victims is key to centring CRMs on survivors. Affective influence differs from the abusive practices themselves, and for this reason, CRMs should meet people's various needs through organisational support, especially for survivors.

- This could mean flexibility in the types of support and assistance provided to survivors.
- This could mean that some survivors will prefer not to receive support and assistance.
- This could mean that some survivors will prefer not to investigate or not to punish the perpetrator.
- This could mean that the organisation reviews and updates its different forms of support.

Consent:

Before taking any steps to respond, it is necessary to make sure that the complainants or victims agree with informed consent on the actions that should be taken and are aware of both the steps that will take place and any ensuing risks. This includes consent to receive services and undergo investigations. In some cases, it also includes consent to formally document the complaint, or to actions being taken against the perpetrator. This is essential if our intention is to centre the process on survivors.

7.2 Types of Complaints

Organisations and initiatives receive different types of complaints that can be placed in two categories: sensitive complaints and general complaints. This classification does not mean that we deal with general complaints with less sensitivity. Rather, it helps us to identify types of complaints that may require a particular response. For example, incidents of sexual exploitation may require specialised expertise and require organisations to ensure prompt response. Non-specialised individuals, on the other hand, may be able to address complaints related to labour exploitation.

General complaints include:

- Complaints about the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of programs implemented by the organisation.
- Complaints about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of projects.
- Complaints about the methods, processes, and procedures used in implementation, design, budgeting, and project (mis)management.
- Complaints about recruitment, dismissal, promotion, and performance evaluations (if not related to discrimination).

Sensitive complaints include:

- Complaints related to exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying.
- Complaints related to fraud and financial and administrative corruption, such as bribery and the misallocation of funds.
- Complaints related to breaches of the organisation's code of conduct and ethical values.
- Complaints related to discrimination or harm based on discrimination.

It is worth noting that sometimes even if a complaint seems general, it may serve as an indicator of more sensitive issues.

Example:

A woman beneficiary complains about the organisation's procedures and the way relief-aid was distributed.
Another woman beneficiary subsequently submits the same complaint.

When reviewing the complaint, the employee who receives complaints goes to the project manager to ask him about the procedures, citing the complaints she received from certain beneficiaries and mentioning them by name.

Afterwards it becomes apparent that the complaint is not only related to procedures, but also to the way the project manager treated the beneficiaries. It becomes clear that he is using his position to flirt with women.

Because the women do not feel safe filing a sensitive complaint about sexual exploitation, they directed their complaints to practical procedures.

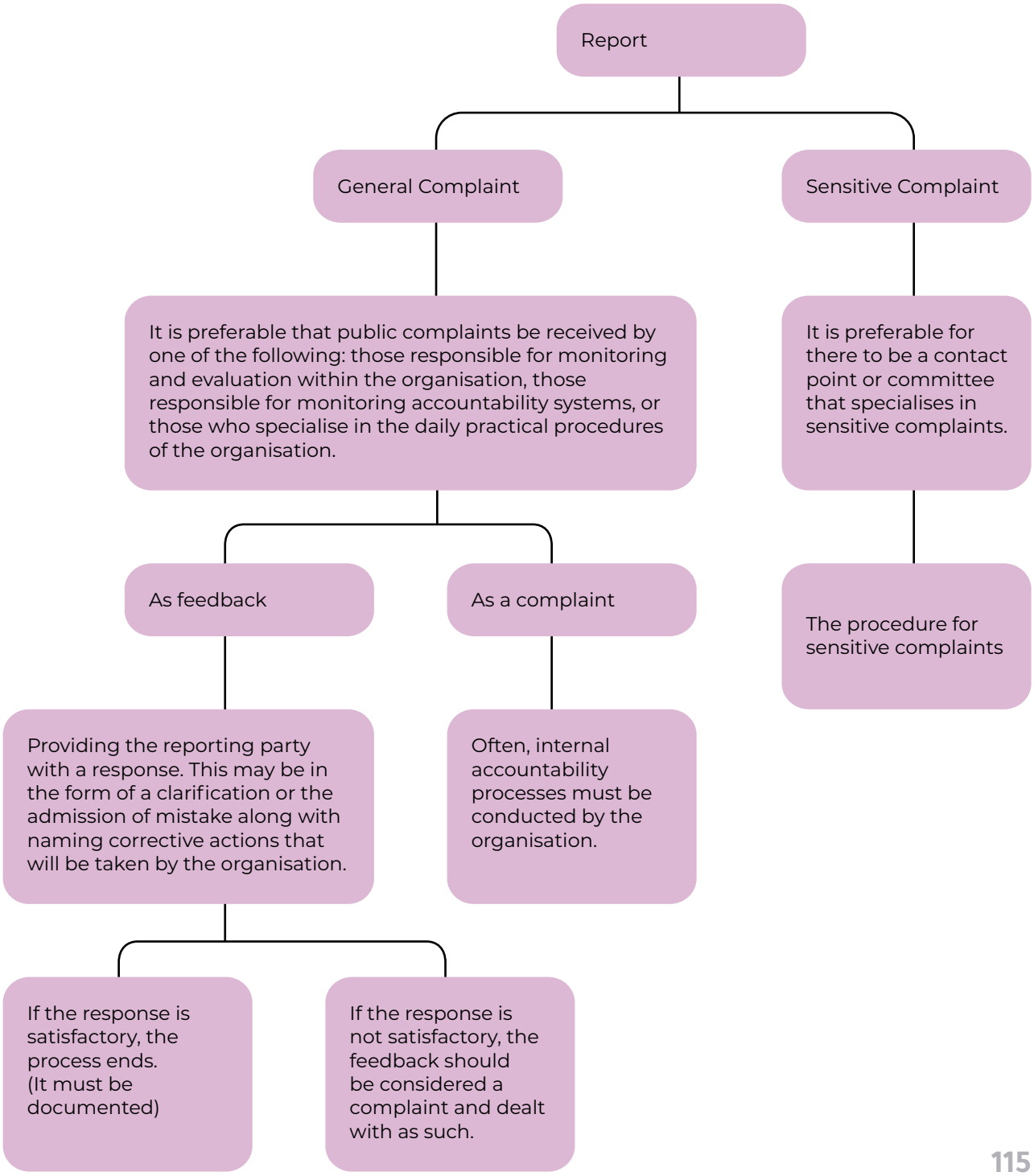
Example:

A beneficiary complains about a training program and the way it was conducted by the organisation.

The organisation treats his complaint as feedback and does not consider the matter in depth.

After several trainings provided by the same trainer with the same organisation, it is discovered that the complaint made by the first complainant indicated bullying that occurred due to discrimination based on sexual orientation. He was exposed to this form of bullying during the training but was unable to call it by its name when he submitted the complaint.

Note: While it is important to deal with complaints in different ways according to their type, it is also crucial that we carefully examine general complaints coming from beneficiaries or personnel (be they permanent or temporary) before classifying them as feedback. A general complaint may indicate the occurrence of abusive practices within the organisation or initiative. Addressing complaints in a satisfactory manner creates a culture of trust and openness at both the external and internal levels of an organisation.



Advice for General Complaints

- Regard all complaints as important and remember that in one way or another they invite us to examine our work.
- Deal with complaints as opportunities to learn, re-evaluate, and self-reflect.
- Deal with complaints as opportunities to review, amend, evaluate, update, and develop the organisation's policies and procedures.
- Deal with complaints as opportunities for the organisations to develop programs, projects, activities, and events.
- General complaints are an indication of the possible existence of larger shortcomings or serious abusive practices.
- If the complaint is dealt with as a feedback, i.e. not warranting verification, and the response is not satisfactory, we must consider it to be a complaint and a matter that needs further investigation.
- Deal with complaints as opportunities to develop human resources and to open up to different opinions and points of view.
- Document all forms of general and sensitive complaints, regardless of the organisation's response.

7.3 Receiving Sensitive Complaints

First, in order to develop mechanisms and procedures for receiving complaints, particularly sensitive ones, we need to designate the channels we will use to receive complaints. It is important that these channels be diverse.

It is also crucial that the organisation create spaces for conversation between colleagues, as some may need access to informal complaint channels. This may be because they lack trust in safeguarding and accountability frameworks, or because they are not sure whether or not the incident they experienced or witnessed merits a formal complaint and investigation.

Advice for Informal Complaints

It is usually advisable to use informal complaints channels when there is a specific misunderstanding, and we need quick solutions. That said, this does not mean that informal complaints channels are not useful for verifying the occurrence of sensitive abusive practices.

If you experienced or witnessed an incident of abuse, it is important to discuss the matter with someone else. This person could be a colleague or a manager, someone who works in human resources, or the person in charge of complaints. We can share these incidents, either verbally or in writing, with whomever we feel comfortable.

If you are not sure whether or not the incident you witnessed or experienced qualifies as an abusive or harmful practice, keep in mind that sometimes people who practice exploitation, harassment, abuse, and bullying mislead their victims into questioning their own feelings and sense of reality.

If we find ourselves in a situation where we do not feel comfortable resorting to formal complaint channels, informal complaints can allow us to document incidents with another person. This documentation may be useful during the investigation process in case we resort to a formal complaint later on.

It is recommended that informal complaints always be documented, either by requesting that a colleague make a record or by recording it one's self in a personal notebook.

If we find ourselves facing a situation that may indicate that someone is being exploited, harassed, assaulted, or

bullied, confronting the abusive party, asking about, and verifying the situation is considered a form of informal complaint or warning of misconduct. They may be unaware of the effects of their actions. It is important to document that conversation itself.

When opening up to someone, it is important to agree on basic principles:

1. Sincere promise to protect privacy and not turn the situation into gossip.
2. That no action will be taken without the consultation and approval of the persons who were subjected to harassment.
3. That there be agreement about follow-up steps and methods.

To be recorded in an informal complaints notebook or journal:

- Incidents and indications of abusive practices at the organisation
- Dates and times of any incidents
- Whether or not other witnesses were present.
- Description of the incident.
- The feelings brought about by the incident.
- The affective impact of the incident.

7.3.1 Reporting Channels

The first thing to think about when building CRMs is methods and channels for reporting. It is important to diversify these channels in response to the different needs of complainants, be they survivors or witnesses.

Reporting channels are the means offered by an organisation to those who would like to submit complaints, either from outside or from within the organisation.

Reporting methods can be designed in consultation with the community groups that make up the organisation's immediate relational network, and with groups belonging to the broader community.

Decentralised Reporting Channels

Organisations operating in an international or transnational context should consider decentralised reporting methods that cover their various geographical areas of operation. These channels must cover all areas in which the organisation operates. This may be achieved by appointing multiple points of contact for sensitive complaints, by forming several specialised committees, or by forming one committee that represents all geographical regions. Decentralizing reporting channels is also important in order to ensure that they are adapted to different contexts and circumstances, such as differences in laws and discrepancies in access to reporting channels to begin with.

Reporting channels

It is important that those responsible for receiving and responding to complaints are well-qualified, experienced, knowledgeable, and have a passion for the work. Important qualifications include:

- The ability to tolerate, adjust, and adapt to surrounding conditions.
- The ability to gain people's trust and be a channel for building trust and agreement between others.
- Self-awareness, emotional responsibility, and the ability to communicate.
- The ability to listen carefully and attentively.
- The ability to refrain from passing judgment.
- The ability to write clear and accurate reports.

There should be a contact point or elected committee that specialises in sensitive complaints

Electronic Mediums

These may include email, virtual forms online, or a contact number via the WhatsApp messaging application. Some companies that specialise in safeguarding provide electronic applications that allow for anonymous reporting.

Face-to-face

It is important to provide a complaint channel that allows concerned parties to report abusive practices face-to-face directly to the point of contact or the committee that has been to respond to such matters.

Over the Phone

Institutions can receive complaints over the phone. Establishing a hotline provides complainants with a confidential way to make their voices heard.

Complaints Box

Complaints boxes can be used to anonymously receive external or internal complaints.

Postal or Paper Communication

While postal services may not be effective within institutional workplaces, it is important to allow whistle-blowers and those filing reports to use paperwork during the complaint process. This may involve leaving a piece of paper in the committee's office, or even asking a third party to deliver papers to the committee.

Operating Procedures that Govern Reporting Channels

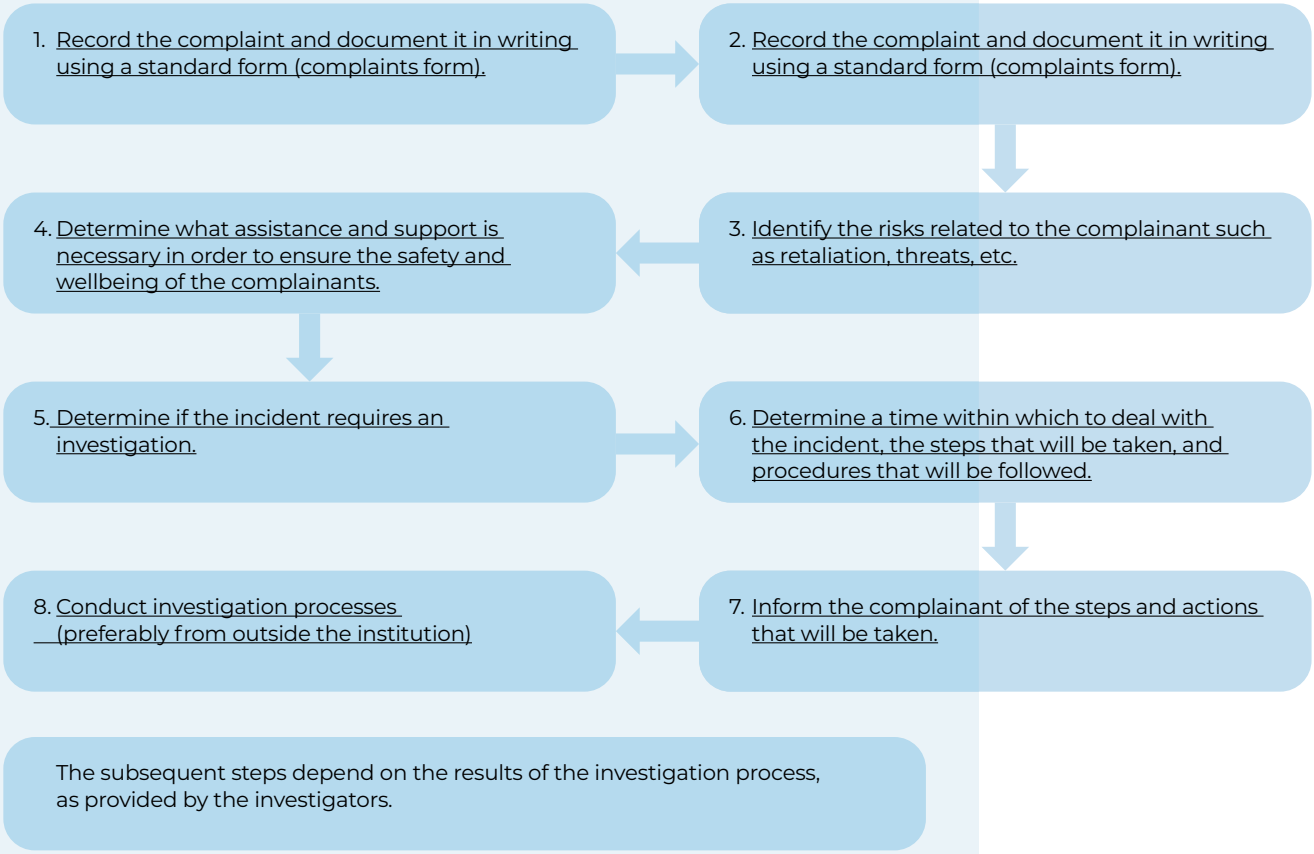
The choice of reporting channels depends on the size and type of institution, the nature of its work, and its geographical areas of operation. Reporting channels need to have clear and fixed operational procedures that provide accurate and detailed instructions that explain how to implement the processes that relate to managing the channels themselves. They should also guarantee the channel's consistency with the basic principles of reporting procedures. For example, it is important to establish fixed and clear procedures related to how complaints are transferred from the complaints box into the hands of those who are responsible for receiving them without compromising security, privacy, and confidentiality.

7.3.2 Receiving Reports

Having built reporting channels and determined the most advantageous methods, we must then think about how to deal with the complaint and set operational procedures that govern the process's trajectory.

In this section, we provide some steps based on best practices in the field for planning a response after receiving a report.

After Receiving a Complaint



All these steps require operating controls and procedures that cover every stage the complaint moves through at the organisation.

These procedures should guarantee transparency, privacy, safety, protection, and a timely response

After determining the procedures to be followed and identifying the persons, committees, and bodies that will handle complaints, it is important that these clarifying procedures are made available to complainants. This will increase their sense of safety and confidence in the organisation's CRM.

7.3.2.1 Recordkeeping and Documentation of Reports

It is important that the complaint or report contains all essential information for documentation and anything that may be helpful in subsequent investigation. Regardless of the type of complaint or the decision taken, a report must be written, as documentation may be useful at later stages.

Sensitive Complaints Form

Name of Complainant (optional)	
Address and contact details	
Age	
Gender	
Legal Status	Refugee / Displaced Person / Immigration Status / Identification Papers
Name of Perpetrator (optional)	
Address and contact details	
Age	
Gender	
Legal Status	Refugee / Displaced Person / Immigration Status / Identification Papers
Have we received informed consent from the abused person?	
When did the incident occur? (Date)	
What time did the incident occur?	
Where did the incident occur?	
Victim's Physical Condition	
Are there any bruises, wounds, or bleeding?	

Victim's Psychological and Emotional Condition	
Describe the condition of the abused person. Do they show signs of shock, tension, panic, or fear?	
Witnesses	
Were there any witnesses?	
Names of Witnesses	Addresses and contact details
Brief description of the incident:	
Accused Details	
Name	
Job description	
Place of work	
Address	
Age	
Gender	
Description of accused's features and appearance	
Did any other parties intervene in the incident?	
Who intervened? Did the police, the accused's organisation, family, or friends intervene? What was the nature of the intervention?	

Assistance		
Type of assistance	Yes / No	In what form?
Was medical care provided to the victim?		
Was legal support provided to the victim?		
Was financial support provided to the victim?		
Was psychosocial provided to the victim?		
Was any other support provided? What was it?		

What security measures were taken to protect the victim?	
Who is responsible for implementing the safeguarding measures?	
Any other useful information?	
Does the victim want an investigation to be started? If yes, why?	
Author of the report (Name)	
Position and organisation	
Date	
Time	
Location	
Signature of author of the report	
Signature of complainant (in case of informed consent)	

7.3.2.2 Confirming Receipt

After record-keeping and documentation, the complainant should receive confirmation that their complaint will be dealt with as soon as possible. Confirmation should be delivered via the same channel used by the complainant. It may be in the form of e-mail, verbal notification, or over the phone.

At this stage, we can prioritise and determine a time-period for dealing with the complaint, according to its type. In cases of sexual assault, harassment, and exploitation, it is recommended that measures be taken within a period ranging from 24 to 48 hours maximum. These measures may include transferring the accused to working from home during the investigation or providing paid leave for the victim.

7.3.2.3 Identifying Risks

Assessing and identifying risks is an essential and ongoing aspect of all procedures involved in responding to complaints, especially those that are sensitive. During this process, it is important to examine risks from several angles. For example, we need to identify risks that may endanger victims, witnesses, organisations, and any and all concerned parties, which may include families, neighbours, and other stakeholders.

Identifying risks requires considering any potential threats to physical, emotional, and moral well-being, or to security, safety, and health, etc.

In this toolkit, however, we offer this risk-assessment for use at the level of structures and hierarchies of power.

Type of Risk	Manifestation	Likelihood	Counter-Strategies
Political	Example: The complaint may cause political consequences that affect the complainants if the aggressor has political power.		
Economic	Example: The presence of an aggressor in the complainant's workplace may cause them harm or have them fired and thus deprive them of their livelihood.		
Social	Example: Survivors may be socially stigmatised if they complain or if the anonymity of their complaint was compromised.		
Technological	Example: Survivors may be vulnerable to bullying, stalking, or even blackmailing with threats to post pictures or videos.		
Environmental	Example: Survivors may be vulnerable to risks related to where they live geographically. For example, if their place of residence is an isolated mountainside far from services and assistance, risks to them may be greater.		
Legal	Example: It is possible to use the law against complainants, as some perpetrators may have legal impunity that may stem from their citizenship status. Migrants may also face unfair legal persecution.		
Relational	Example: This risk applies to all connections and relationships, whether it is the relational power of the perpetrator due to the social power that they may have, or risks related to the victim's relationships.		

We must conduct a risk-analysis during each step taken during the process of responding to reports, and especially concerning sensitive complaints.

It is important when conducting this analysis to broaden our perspective for thinking about risks and to continually reflect and consult with complainants and victims.

7.3.2.4 Assistance and Referrals

Abusive practices of exploitation, assault, sexual harassment, and bullying affect the abused differently. Because impact varies according to our different positionalities, it is critical when receiving reports that we focus on survivors and those subjected to abuse.

Dealing with instances of abuse in organisations requires us to create referral pathways that involve a list of services available to the abused.

To this end, we must think about the different services that a victim, and in some cases witnesses, may need. These may include medical care, psychosocial support, legal support, and protection to ensure safety and security.

Medical Care	Psychosocial Support
Medical care may require keeping an up-to-date list of doctors who can provide medical care, especially in conflict situations where hospitals and medical centres are inaccessible. Basic services that the abused person may need include: • Treatment and referral of any cases involving potentially life-threatening health complications • Treatment or prevention of sexually transmitted infections • Safe abortion in cases of unwanted pregnancy • Emergency contraception • Treatment of wounds and injuries • Supportive counselling • Referrals for social and psychological support services It is important to focus on alternative reproductive health services. In some Arabic-speaking countries, for example, abortion is illegal, and emergency contraception may not be available. We advise you to turn to The A Project (hyperlink available) in Lebanon if you find yourselves in need of advice about alternatives.	Psychosocial support is extremely important when dealing with cases of exploitation, assault, harassment, and bullying, regardless of the sexual or non-sexual nature of the abuse. Our role in providing psychosocial support starts from the very first moment we receive a report. Our response must be psychologically sensitive and considerate of the abused person's social context. Like all services, it is extremely important to vet psychosocial support services for their sensitivity and impact when responding to cases of abuse, especially those of a sexual nature. Some people may need various forms of psychosocial services, which requires a list of service providers. This list could include counselling and survivor-support services, organisations that do case-management, and community centres that provide services such as: • Confidential emotional support and psychological counselling • Family counselling and mediation • Assistance with social integration or subsistence • Programs for building skills or generating income

Suggestion

Some organisations may be able to ally with people who have social power such as local officials (in Arabic-speaking countries this could be the *mukhtar*, a type of neighbourhood and town official), community-leaders, or anyone with recognised influence. These entities may also be able to meet social and community needs like mediation between family members, safe shelter and spaces, financial resources, etc.

Legal Support

While legal support is essential when responding to some abuses, the law in Arabic-speaking countries is usually biased against victims. For example, perpetrators can use libel, slander, and defamation laws to silence their victims. Laws that reduce punishment for rapists if they propose marriage to their victims are also unhelpful. In some countries, cases of rape against men, especially those involving penetration, are dealt with as "unnatural sexual acts" and the victim is criminalised.

It is for this reason that legal support provided to witnesses, whistle-blowers, informants, and victims must take note of those legal problems and obstacles that may cause harm.

Referral systems must include legal support, which may come in the form of legal clinics, support groups for survivors, or programs that provide:

- Legal awareness for survivors and whistle-blowers about their rights or lack thereof under the law.
- Confidential services, especially those related to legal options and rights or the lack thereof.
- Legal representation for survivors, whistle-blowers, and witnesses.

Protection and Safety

Most people who have been abused or assaulted need reassurance that they will be protected and made to feel safe. This could come in the form of offering time-off, for example, or providing a safe-space in the workplace, or reassuring them of their job-security. Some may need additional services that guarantee protection and safety other than those guaranteed by the organisation or the party that received the complaint.

Protection and safety services may include organisations and groups that provide advocacy and support to survivors and whistle-blowers, as well as centres that provide:

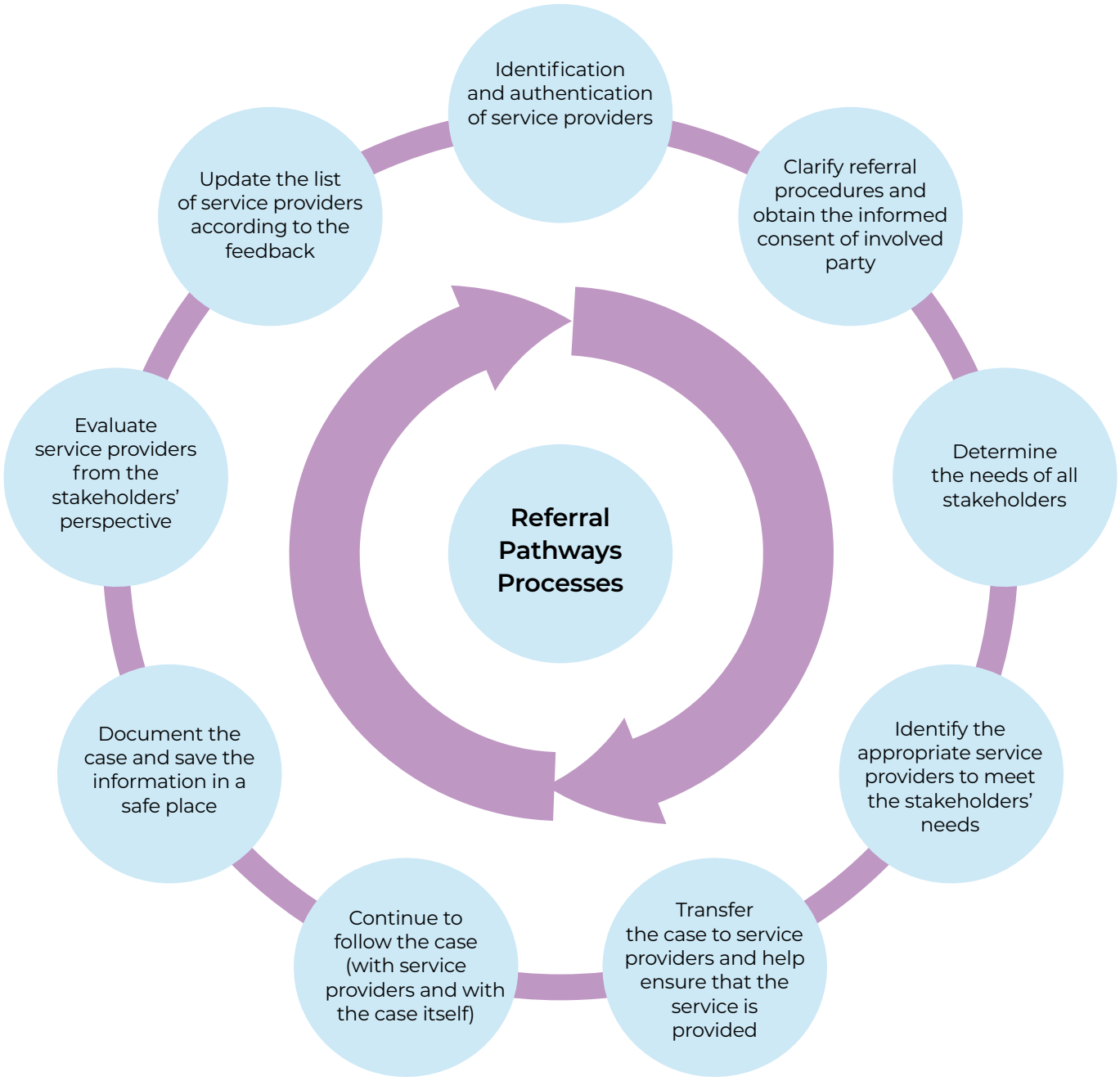
- Safe shelter
- Transportation and relocation assistance
- Witness protection programs
- Benefactors who can provide financial support for housing

Safeguarding policies should also be accompanied by whistleblowing policies specifically related to the protection of whistle-blowers.

Although responsibility to protect and ensure safety technically falls on a region's security sector, we found that such responsibility is rarely fulfilled in Arabic-speaking countries.

Standard Operational Procedures for Referral Pathways

- **Standards of Assistance:** Offering assistance is an essential aspect of receiving sensitive complaints. Criteria for providing support, steps to be taken during the referral process, and referral pathway details must all be included as appendices to safeguarding policies. It is important to leave room for flexibility in terms of providing support. The just distribution of assistance requires that we analyse different forms of power, especially those related to the abused party's positionalities, circumstances, and affective experience (how they were impacted by the abuse).
- **Vetting Service Providers:** Organisations must have an updated contact list of service providers. Preferably these service providers have been through a vetting process to verify their competence, eligibility, ethics, and work-standards. This is to avoid the common problem of people being subjected to abuse by service providers.
- **Informed Consent Procedures:** While using referral pathways to provide support, those who receive complaints must ensure that the abused party is well-informed about the services to which they are being referred, and that they consent to the referral. This may require providing them with brochures or leaflets about service providers, and we may need to document their consent.
- **Risk-Assessment Procedures:** Risks to the person(s) abused, their families, and their social networks due to the referral process itself should be assessed. Poor services can cause harm, and just getting to a service provider's geographic location could pose a threat.



Note: All referral pathways processes need SOPs. Service providers should be evaluated according to the basic standards outlined in Section 7.1. where there is a simplified form for service providers.

Centring the Victim's Experience

- The person who has been abused has the right to feel safe and dignified during treatment and care. They are also entitled to privacy, confidentiality, and access to justice.
- Support and assistance mechanisms should be built according to different people's needs as they differ based on age, background, gender, special needs, and different abilities.
- Care that is provided to the abused should honour the principle of "do no harm," and ensure privacy, safety, and non-discrimination.
- The abused should be given space for self-determination.
- Abused persons and complainants should have the right to obtain information related to the services that will be provided to them and the procedures that will be followed.
- It is the right of those who have been abused to determine what kind of help they need.

7.3.3 Response and Investigation

While all complaints must be documented and all concerned parties referred to the support and assistance they need, they do not all require investigations. Those who have been abused should be able to identify and decide on the next steps.

Note: Not everyone wants to open an investigation. Some survivors may prefer to document incidents as a way to prove abuse in the long term, especially if they feel that the circumstances of an investigation will not be in their best interests or in their favour.

7.3.3.1 Investigations

Investigation processes and procedures are an essential aspect of responding to accusations of exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment. Investigations provide evidence that the organisation has dealt with the accusations and taken the necessary corrective actions.

After determining that the abused person wants to proceed with the investigation, it is important to seek the assistance of investigators who specialise in the form of abuse reported. Some complaints may not require specialised investigators, but in all cases the persons appointed should have no conflicts of interest that may affect the course of the investigation.

During the investigation period, survivors and complainants should be periodically informed of the investigation's updates.

Investigation committees should be chosen according to the following basic criteria:

- **Professionalism:** Investigators are able to exercise sound judgment in their professional conduct.
- **Responsibility:** Investigators are trustworthy, that is, they can be relied upon and the results of the investigation can be trusted.
- **Qualifications and Competence:** They must have sufficient experience in conducting specialised interviews and investigations for the reported violations, as well as adequate contextual knowledge and structural sensitivity. Some investigations may require specialists in certain fields such as forensic medicine, psychology, and law.
- **Independence:** Investigators should have no vested interests that may conflict with the case or the course of the investigation.

It is important to choose investigators from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds, and they should have extensive experience conducting interviews, even if that experience is part of other duties (as legal advisors, HR professionals, or consultants, for example). In addition, they should be highly aware of the organisation's policies related to sexual abuse and exploitation, human resources, safeguarding, etc.

It is preferable that investigation personnel be made up of members of the same community as the concerned parties, and that they speak the language of the local community.

Investigation objectives:

- Confirm that the abuse occurred
- Verify that the perpetrator has been made aware of the extent of harm and damages
- Identify the root causes of the abuse
- Identify the systems that could have prevented the abuse
- Identify the circumstances that might hinder the implementation of corrective actions
- Offer concluding recommendations regarding policies, procedures, and processes that allow exploitation to occur
- Offer concluding recommendations regarding subsequent steps that the organisations should follow

Types of investigation evidence:

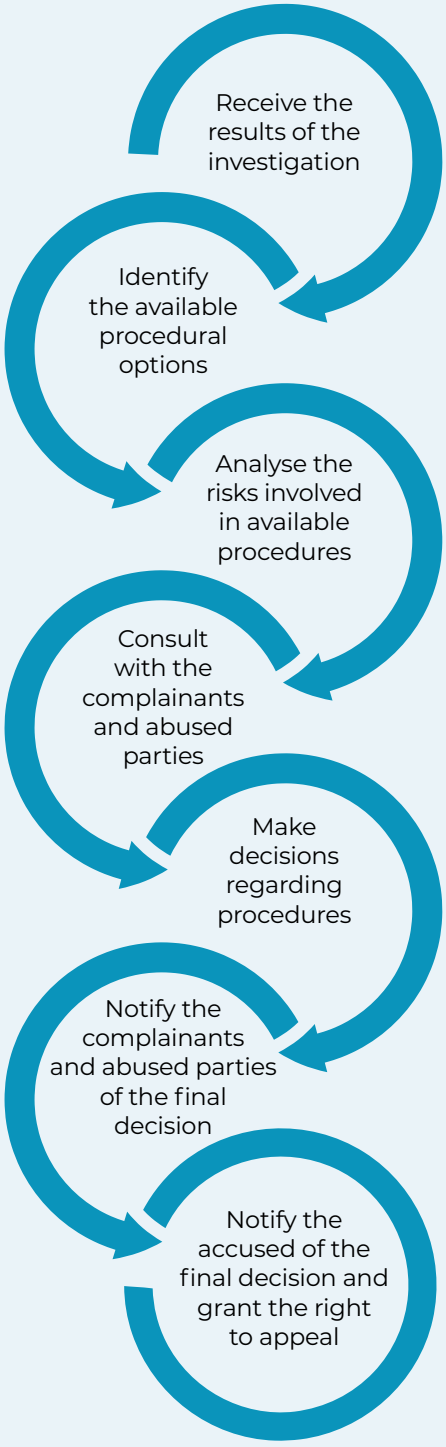
- Witnesses: Testimonies are one of the first forms of evidence that is collected during an investigation, as witnesses can sometimes refute or confirm that an incident has occurred without the need to resort to physical evidence.
- Physical evidence: This takes various forms such as pictures, videos, messages, and audio recordings. Physical evidence should be preserved in accordance with best practices for evidence preservation.
- Medical evidence: This form of evidence is rarely used, and is often unnecessary when testimonies and physical evidence are available. It may be preferable not to resort to medical institutions in order to preserve the physical dignity of the abused.

Note: Investigators do not implement penalties or take corrective actions. This is the responsibility of the organisation or initiative.

7.3.3.2 Learning and Corrective Action

After an investigation has been completed, the organisation should take necessary steps and measures in order to deal with the accused person in consultation with complainants and victims, reaching decisions that centre their interests and wishes.

The chart below shows the preferred process to follow after receiving the results of the investigation.



This process requires a number of control measures that organisations must have in place in order to implement an appropriate response to incidents of abuse that centres survivors. This requires a predetermined list of corrective actions and penalties that perpetrators will be subject to, in accordance with the type and degree of violation and its impact on the victim.

Example list of Corrective Measures:

Type of violation	Corrective measures in chronological order based on frequency			Type of violation
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Violations related to exploitation				
Labour Exploitation	Verbal notice	Written notice	Final warning	Termination while maintaining contractual rights
Embezzlement	Termination and loss of any contractual rights			
Violations related to harassment				
Verbal harassment	Written notice	Final warning	Termination and loss of any contractual rights	
Sexual-physical harassment	Termination and loss of any contractual rights			

Examples of Essential SOPs:

- Risk-analysis of recommended corrective actions.
- Procedures for documenting the entire process of handling the complaint, including processes and results.
- Procedures for determining who should be informed of final results.
- Control procedures for communication about the case under investigation.
- List of corrective actions for the abusive behaviour, may include warnings, termination, and others.
- Control procedures for the learning process.

The response should not be limited to punishing the accused if their violation is proven. Instead, it should trigger a review of the organisation's or initiative's overall accountability framework.

7.3.3.3 Collective Responsibility

Responding to abusive practices at organisations is a significant challenge and difficult process, but it is also a major learning opportunity for dedicated organisations and initiatives, as well as an opportunity to share this knowledge with others. Good examples of response processes that created learning opportunities are the experiences of entre for Rights and Freedoms and the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression in Egypt (hyperlinks in Arabic). After responding to complaints, the two organisations published statements explaining the process that was undertaken in order to deal with cases of harassment.

8 Alternative Modes of Response

In previous chapters, we reviewed the necessary procedures and processes for building organisational safeguarding systems. We are aware, however, that these procedures sometimes and for various reasons may fail us when trying to respond to cases of sexual and non-sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. With this in mind, we have tried to illuminate some shortcomings of prevailing safeguarding frameworks. Despite these challenges, we find that proposing alternative response methods is extremely important, especially in circumstances that do not allow for the application of procedures or in the event that they are unable to provide an adequate response. There is no single method that can be considered "correct" and applicable in all cases. Flexibility and thinking outside the box are indispensable for all organisations in order to choose response methods that account for all the details.

In addition, we cannot always rely on "experts," "the law," or "traditional systems" in order to address these cases. The alternative methods proposed herein, which require no academic qualifications, invite us to deal with the roots of problems while centring the safety of survivors and the transformation of society as a whole. They also invite us to deal with perpetrators while aiming to correct their behaviours, rather than just punishing them as if they cannot change. The book The Revolution Starts at Home, which was authored by a number of feminists of colour, has helped us immensely in thinking about and formulating alternatives.

In addition to advice inspired by The Revolution Starts at Home, in the second part of this section we describe self-awareness practices that, if adopted at the level of the individual, will help us respond to cases of abuse. We also address some important topics having to do with safeguarding organisations should keep in mind and integrate into preventive measures and personnel trainings. These tools can help us avoid and respond to harmful practices and increase our self-awareness, which in turn influences the organisation's network of relationships, and thus affects social change more broadly.

The following sections aim to:

- Provide alternative collective approaches for dealing with abusive practices in the event that legal systems are difficult to navigate, non-existent, or unfair.
- Provide alternative approaches for addressing abusive practices in contexts where procedures are difficult to apply.
- Provide cost-effective alternative approaches that organisations and initiatives can resort to when need be and when existing procedures are unable to address abusive practices.
- Provide self-help tools and techniques that assist us psychologically and emotionally when dealing with abuse in organisations and in our daily lives, intimate practices, and relationships.

8.1 Alternatives: The Revolution Starts at Home

8.1.1 Prioritising Self-Determination

When we hear about cases of exploitation, abuse, and harassment, especially of a sexual nature, a set of survivor stereotypes comes to mind. These stereotypes may include expectations or assumptions about the form of justice that survivors desire. They may also objectify survivors and treat them like numbers and cases. Thus, it is always important to allow survivors to decide their own fates, irrespective of what we think is best. For example, some survivors may not want to take a stand or any action against the perpetrator, while others may want the perpetrator to be punished. Some may need an apology and an acknowledgement of the harm. Some may want to be involved in all of the details of the response and accountability process, and others may prefer that the situation or incident be dealt with without their involvement.

Therefore, when responding to these cases, we must present all available options and response tools, as well as all risks involved, so that survivors can self-determine in full awareness of their circumstances. It is also crucially important that we express clear and active feminist solidarity while presenting these options, and that we state our commitment to supporting the survivor even if this entails challenging fear-inducing social norms such as stigma and victim-blaming. We may find ourselves in situations where we differ from survivors in our values and principles, but nevertheless we must avoid trying to persuade or pressure them or acting without their explicit informed consent. This requires that we refrain from projecting our experiences, feelings, values, principles, and prejudices (be they implicit or explicit) onto them or onto the general situation. After all, survivors know more about their affective experiences than we, the listeners, do. And as we indicated before, it is important to prioritise survivors' self-determination at all stages of the case, starting from receiving the complaint to corrective actions.

8.1.2 Safety Planning and Security

In addition to thinking about traditional ways to provide safety, security, and safeguarding, we must also think about safety and security in terms of the emotional and moral dimensions that pertain to survivors and to our societies as a whole. When building safety and security plans we should reflect on the following points:

- How will the abuser behave when confronted with the abuse?
- How can we work together to disrupt the perpetrator's strategies?
- While we cannot control the perpetrator's violence, we can control our willingness and preparedness to respond to it.
- Warning community members about potential harm or abuse.
- Inform stakeholders about the response plan.
- Analysing the forms of power possessed by all concerned parties (especially perpetrators) in order to prepare an appropriate response.

8.1.3 Cautious Thinking

When planning a response, in addition to analysing the power held by the perpetrator, it is of the utmost importance to analyse the consequences and risks of the response itself. Our choices about how to respond can have consequences for other parties and for society as a whole. Thus, we must be flexible in our response planning and implementation, as surrounding circumstances may force us to change the plan completely, or to adjust its time frame. Therefore, it is important to ask ourselves the following questions:

- Will my response negatively or positively affect general society in the long run? How will my response affect general society in the short term?
- Will my response affect other members of the community?
- Is this plan the most conducive to collective safety?
- Is it possible that the abused party's identity will be exposed by my plan? What consequences may ensue if their identity is exposed?
- Will my plan isolate the victim?
- Will my plan endanger the families of the perpetrators?
- Will my plan put anyone at risk?

8.1.4 Humanising Concerned Parties

We usually feel angry when we hear about cases of abuse and societal violence. This anger is very legitimate. When dealing with these cases, however, we must not forget to humanise all concerned parties, including victims, perpetrators, and those who could have prevented the harm. Regardless of their role in incidents of abuse, dehumanising people, has collective implications that maintain power within systems of oppression. Punitive systems are often harsh and severe with perpetrators, especially those who belong to marginalised groups. Meanwhile, perpetrators who are well-positioned in hierarchies of power often escape punishment with impunity. In the United States, for example, Black men are disproportionately punished by state and police mechanisms that increase the vulnerability of Black communities, while others who commit more far-reaching crimes often evade punishment. Despite proven claims that former President Trump had committed sexual harassment and assault, he managed to escape punishment in a country that boasts its alleged strong laws against crimes of a sexual nature. If our sole focus is on punishing the perpetrator and we do not think about alternative methods, we are evading our collective responsibility and self-accountability. In such a case, we must recognise our contribution to continued community violence.

Humanising all concerned parties does not mean protecting abusers from the consequences of their abusive actions. Rather, it means dealing with them as human beings who exist in networks of relationships and are influenced by our actions and responses to their violence. For example, it is important to think about the families and close friends of the perpetrator and not expose them to danger, ostracise them, or cause them harm. In cases where perpetrators of harassment are exposed, especially in Arabic-speaking regions, they are ostracised, and their families may be retaliated against and exposed to various forms of violence. Hence, humanisation means being able to account for the human dimensions of the lives of perpetrators, as they are an integral part of the societies that we seek to change.

8.1.5 Collective Organizing for Accountability

Seeking help and participation from others helps us to respond appropriately and avoid burnout or violent societal reactions. It also allows us to benefit from the lessons learned, experiences, and community resources available beyond our work or our organisations. Collective organizing builds stronger communities and minimises isolation, which in turn help prevent and limit the spread of sexual violence.

8.1.6 Shared Analysis of Sexual Violence

While definitions of violence and abuse between organisations do vary from time to time, common perceptions of many of these terms are often quite different. These discrepancies frequently help perpetrators avoid blame or responsibility for their actions. In addition to differences in perceptions of abusive practices, we also see discrepancies in how consent, acceptance, harm, affect, accountability, etc, are understood. When cooperating to confront sexual and non-sexual community violence, therefore, it is crucial to agree on certain aspects of how we understand the basic terms we use during our response.

For example, terms like blame and responsibility can be thought of in different forms, and it is always possible to delve deeper into the question of who is responsible for violence. Some believe that our actions should be judged independently of our intentions or subconscious motives, and others believe that if we are oblivious to the consequences of our actions, we cannot be blamed (Marion Smiley, 1992). Answering this question may also relate to our understanding of free will, as some believe that the nature of our will determines whether or not we deserve blame. In our view, responsibility lies with all those who could have prevented or limited the spread of harm. We also consider free will to be something that each of us possesses, regardless of its form, and therefore, we do not consider harm to be one person's problem, but rather a reflection of society.

8.1.7 Clarity and Specificity

When responding to sexual violence and other cases of abuse, it is crucial to define the intended purpose of the response, which includes dealing with the perpetrator with clarity and precision. This means specifying the demands we have of them and the measures that will be taken against them so that our vision is clear and unambiguous.

Questions that may help in reaching clarity:

- Does accountability mean providing psycho-therapy to the perpetrator?
- Does accountability mean that the perpetrator must take responsibility for their actions?
- Does it mean a personal or public apology? Do we demand a change in behaviour?
- Does response mean undermining the perpetra-tors' power, regardless of its form? That power may be based on post or title in the workplace; it may be economic; or it may be that social power gives them immunity.

8.1.8 Transparency with Perpetrators

The response process sometimes consumes our attention and causes us to neglect informing perpetrators about results and the demands we have of them. For example, without clarifying our demands to perpetrators, we do not consider public shaming to be an effective means, as it is not a goal or demand in and of itself. In some cases it may be an effective means, such as when perpetrators possess a social status that allows them to misuse their power over others, but it is never a goal. At other times we find that public shaming can increase the isolation of survivors, cause a negative societal reaction, or motivate perpetrators to seek revenge or defame the survivors. What's more, informing perpetrators of demands entailed by a response to violence is part of the collective accountability that falls on all of our shoulders. Even if we are not directly linked to perpetrators, it is the right of each and every one of us to hold them accountable and present demands that serve society and limit abusive behaviours.

8.1.9 Reaching Out for Support

In some cases, friends and relatives can follow up more effectively with perpetrators than we can. Their families or those close to them may be able to prevent them from acting abusively, ensure their psychological well-being, and follow up on and confirm the implementation of accountability demands. In resorting to those who are close to perpetrators, we reduce the burden placed on us and distribute responsibility around. Perhaps perpetrators will listen to their loved ones more than they will us. Ultimately, incorporating additional entities such as the family can lead to the transformation of abusive values within society itself.

8.1.10 Readiness for a Long-Term Process

When responding to cases of sexual and community violence, it is important to be aware that social change requires patience, time, and acceptance that this is a long-term process. Accountability is an ongoing project, not a goal, and follow-up is an integral part of the response itself. Follow-up requires that we make sure that our demands are implemented, and it may require us to deal with emergencies or setbacks that could occur after demands are met.

8.2 Emotional Responsibility and Self-Reflection

8.2.1 Emotional Responsibility

Emotions are an essential part of our daily lives both at the workplace and at home or in other private spaces. Feelings also play a fundamental role in our day-to-day behaviours, principles, and values, and the ways in which we treat others. Most safeguarding resources focus on familiarizing employees with the procedures, policies, and penalties resulting from abusive practices. They often overlook the importance of unpacking how our feelings affect our workplaces and relationships, which requires that we understand and practise emotional responsibility. We see the importance of addressing feelings in this way because many of the problems related to implementing safeguarding systems are directly linked to the biases and projections of those who receive complaints. Such unexamined feelings often create obstacles even when complaints are heard and received. For example, we found that some receivers of complaints about bullying see the cases from their own perspective, and not from that of the affective influence on the victim. In some cases, when receivers do not feel that the words directed at victims are insulting, the case is dismissed and the harm is denied. Therefore, it is important to address our own feelings and projections in order to understand and realise how those subjected to abusive practices have been affected. We all have implicit biases that can only be confronted by exercising emotional responsibility. This chapter is not directed at victims and survivors, but rather towards people who deal with cases or work in organisations and wish to address their biases and understand how their emotions impact their relationships in the workplace.

The term emotional responsibility deals with (1) responsibility and (2) emotionality. Central to this concept is the idea that only those who are experiencing a feeling are capable of controlling it, and thus controlling their beliefs, principles, behaviours, and emotions. Emotional responsibility also suggests that others are responsible only for “stimulating” our feelings towards an incident or a situation, and that they can behave badly or abusively and create distressing circumstances that contribute to negative feelings. Exercising emotional responsibility means owning our feelings, being aware of our agency and impact, and not blaming others for our emotions.

Emotional responsibility is not concerned with the question of "who is in the wrong," but rather with our ability to respond to feelings and needs. It requires that we learn and relearn our emotions, values, principles, behaviours, and prejudices, and respond to our own (and sometimes others') emotional needs. Practising emotional responsibility helps us with empathy, care, and other relational feelings (i.e. those generated through relationships).

Exercising emotional responsibility helps us to:

- Avoid projecting our experiences and feelings onto others.
- Avoid letting our biases influence how we treat others.
- Deal with prejudices of which we are not aware.
- Own our feelings and take responsibility for our emotions.
- Avoid discrimination resulting from prejudice, which may be based on race, religion, dress, appearance, etc.
- Avoid causing harm to others "unintentionally."
- Increase awareness of behaviours and prejudices that are brought about by unnamed feelings.

Definition of Projection:

We define projection as the practice of making other people responsible for our feelings. In order to avoid projection, we must have an in-depth understanding of our core emotions and how they are brought about. Feelings-projection appears in many forms, some of which cause harm and affect others.

Examples of Projection:

- Idealising someone and exaggerated disappointment if they do something wrong.
- Holding our loved ones responsible for making and keeping us happy.
- Dealing with someone in a certain way because of prejudices or linking them to incidents from our personal emotional histories.
- Projecting our past experiences on situations with new people.
- Discrimination in all its forms can be considered a type of projection, as it consists of projecting stereotypes onto broad groups.
- Making others responsible for our feelings of happiness, despair, or misery, and taking anger out on others.
- A person feeling insecure and attributing it to others instead of dealing with the feeling itself.
- A woman who is cheating on her husband and projects her feelings onto him when her suspicion of him grows.
- A man feeling insecure about his body and beginning to criticise the bodies of others.
- Projecting our own love or care onto people who have not merited our trust.

8.2.2 Practising Emotional Responsibility

It is important to practise emotional responsibility specifically in the face of conflicts at the workplace, and not to expect victims to follow the guidelines put forth in this section. What follows is aimed at creating safe work environments centred on relationality.

The following are the first steps to consider when beginning the practice of emotional responsibility:

1. Accept that something has happened.
2. Accept the feelings activated by the incident.
3. Accept that these feelings are present.
4. Affirm to oneself that the presence of these feelings is legitimate.
5. Think about ways to change or avoid the incident in the future.
6. Reflect on one's own ability to respond to the incident.

7. Consult with others.
8. Ask other concerned parties what they can do to change, avoid, or prevent the incident, and about their ability to respond.
9. Help others think about how to prevent the incident.
10. Think of ways to protect ourselves from repeat incidents or to deal with the feelings that may be stimulated.

Example

1. I hear my colleague insult another person.
2. I felt scared when I heard the words he used.
3. I accept the feeling of fear.
4. My fear is legitimate.
5. It would be better not to hear my colleague use that language.
6. Own the ability to confront my colleague and ask him not to curse.
7. Consult another colleague about the confrontation.
8. Tell my colleague that insulting and cursing out others induces a sense of fear in me, and ask him how it can be avoided.
9. Advise my colleague to make his phone calls outside of the office and otherwise avoid insults in the workplace.
10. I delve into the fear I felt and discover that insults trigger past-experiences of domestic violence.

Emotional responsibility requires that we face any problems that may arise in public life and at the workplace and use our communication skills to avoid making others responsible for our feelings.

Example of an emotionally responsible statement:

I am responsible for my feelings. I feel misery as a result of this incident or situation.

Example of an emotionally irresponsible statement:

You make me feel miserable. You make me feel happy.

Because the world around us is comprised of networks of relationships, we all contribute to "activating" or "stimulating" certain feelings in others. Each of us involves different people in our lives, and the emotional space we give them makes it possible for them to stimulate or activate certain feelings in us. This space is not only limited to romantic relationships, but extends to workplaces:

- I respect my boss and therefore their opinion will "stimulate different feelings" that are affected by how they treat me.
- I trust my colleagues and therefore any violation of this trust or failure from their side to meet my expectations will affect me emotionally.

I am the one who gave them the space to create these feelings, and therefore, although the feeling of disappointment is real, I can control it. This does not take away from the impact of the harm that was caused, nor from the fact that the abuse occurred.

Because the world around us is made of networks of relationships, we have to continually re-learn the concept of emotional independence as others continue to be able to "stimulate" and "activate" feelings in us, just as we can in them.

Responsible Expression of Emotions	Emotionally Responsible	Projection
I am responsible for your feelings	I care about you; I have a feeling of care towards you and your happiness is a concern of mine. I will behave in a way that makes you feel happy.	My job and passion are to make you happy and relieve you of any pain. I will do this regardless of the circumstances and even at the expense of my own needs. Everything you feel is my fault and responsibility. Also, I don't think you are able to meet your needs on your own.
You are responsible for my feelings	I understand how your actions affect my feelings and I will be open with you about my needs and the way I want you to treat me.	My happiness is your constant concern, and you are the only person who can alleviate my suffering and pain. Everything I feel is your fault and your responsibility and I cannot meet my needs on my own.

8.2.3 Owning Feelings: Practical Steps

To practise emotional responsibility, we must always return to our core emotions and avoid looking only at relational and collective feelings. Relational and collective feelings generate core emotions, the repression of which leads to projection.

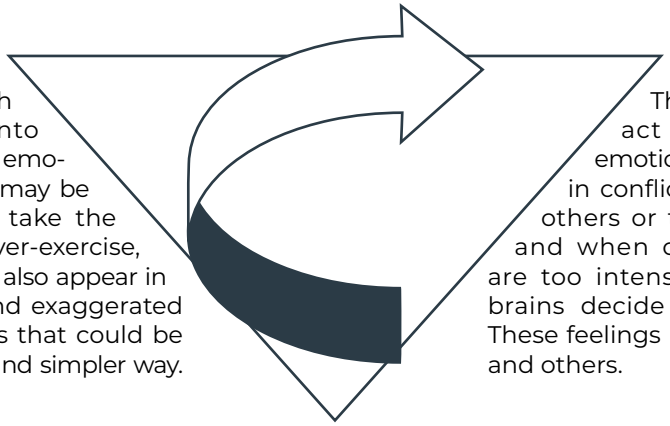
Therefore, it is important to make our emotions conscious by returning to core emotions. This process creates space for us to get some distance from momentary, overwhelming feelings such as anxiety or stress, and to adopt a more holistic view. Making our feelings conscious also helps us clearly define our needs, unencumbered by the confusion and ambiguity that projection generates. Through this process, we are able to identify the main causes of our emotional crises, and thus to own them instead of projecting them onto others. It is important to note that making feelings conscious does not mean suppressing them. On the contrary, it means understanding the root causes of our feelings, and helps us reach a state of tolerance, acceptance, and being-at-peace with our basic feelings.

Types of feelings:

- **Core Emotions:** These are feelings one can stimulate in one's self and do not require the presence of another person. Others can also stimulate these feelings in me through a network of relationships. Certain circumstances that do or do not involve other people can also bring about these feelings. They include fear, anger, sadness, joy, excitement, and disgust.
- **Relational Emotions:** These are feelings that require the involvement of others in order to be stimulated. They include feelings of trust, respect, love, hate, prejudice, empathy, responsibility, embarrassment, and all other feelings that are directed towards others.
- **Collective Emotions:** These are feelings that are shared by a society or group of individuals, and which are brought about as a result of a common collective experiences. These feelings could emerge due to life circumstances experienced by community members, such as wars that engender feelings of injustice and loss, etc. They could also emerge due to collective memories, such as those related to history or race, which may generate feelings of pride and belonging.

The website of psychologist Hillary Hendel contains very helpful advice for better understanding our emotions, including the theory of The Change Triangle. This triangle helps us to make our various emotions conscious in such a way as to enable us to practice emotional responsibility and reach a state of calm and connection with ourselves.

Change Triangle (Hilary Hendel)



Defenses
This the state in which we avoid delving into inhibitory and basic emotions. These defenses may be bad habits that can take the form of overeating, over-exercise, or addiction. They can also appear in the form of strong and exaggerated reactions to situations that could be dealt with in a better and simpler way.

Inhibitory Emotions
These are feelings that act to suppress basic emotions when the latter is in conflict with what pleases others or the society at large, and when our basic emotions are too intense to bear, and our brains decide to suppress them. These feelings include shame, guilt, and others.

Core Emotions
These emotions sometimes occur in the form of physical feelings. These feelings communicate our basic needs in the environment that we are in, and include sadness, fear, anger, pleasure (joy/happiness), excitement, disgust.

Connecting with our core feelings leads to a state of serenity, calm, curiosity, communication, empathy, trust, courage, and clarity.

Practical example of the change triangle and the process of making feelings conscious:

- → Today I am anxious about the public lecture I will give.
- → Whenever I think about it, I sweat and feel intense heart palpitations.
- → I do not accept this feeling of anxiety → "the core emotion."
- → I avoid dealing with it through negative thinking: everyone will discover that I am incompetent or incapable of speaking in front of an audience.
- → This negative thinking inhibits my feelings of anxiety → "inhibitory emotions."

→ I rush to tidy and clean my house, and make a number of phone calls → "transition to defence mechanisms" — this shift usually occurs unconsciously.
→ All of this because I don't want to feel my anxiety.

What can be done?

I ask myself the following questions:

- What is the core emotion overwhelming me right now?
- What are the sensations in my body at this moment? Sweating? Tightness of chest? Racing heart? Do I feel hot?

After asking these questions, I conclude that the core emotion is anxiety.

Addressing the emotion → I deal with the emotion as if it is separate from me. I imagine it as a child that deserves care and support in order to understand its triggers. I refrain from judging myself and my feelings (e.g. accusing myself of being weak) and ask myself; what is the source of this anxiety? Is it a feeling of sadness, anger, or pain? → I may experience fear. I then ask, what is causing this fear? → Am I afraid of the judgments of others? Is it fear of failure? → I ask myself, will this fear kill me? Or will I accept and not repress its presence? → I reassure myself that the emotion will not kill me and that even if these scary situations occur, I will survive.

A Final Word

We hope that this toolkit will serve its readers and we wish to express our understanding that many of the topics discussed herein are difficult and stimulate negative feelings that we may have ignored and adapted to for years. It is for this reason that we conclude this toolkit with sections related to emotions, in the hope that this will be a healing journey for those who have been subjected to any abusive practices. For us, as writers and researchers, the writing process and research we undertook in order to build this toolkit have been difficult and stimulated negative feelings that brought us back to memories and moments in which we ourselves experienced abusive practices like those mentioned in the toolkit. Despite the difficulty of dealing with these subjects, and the way we can be affected and impacted in the process, we found an impetus towards healing in this work. The conversations and consultations that we carried out, as well as the overall writing process, helped us to examine, define, and name abusive practices that we have been and continue to be affected by and subjected to, but which we were trying to sweep under the rug.

Through this healing journey, and through hearing the stories of others, we found that we are not alone in our exposure and vulnerability to these abusive practices, but rather that they are systemic, pervasive, and frequent occurrences in all of our lives. Creating this toolkit has given unprecedented legitimacy to the emotions that are generated by practices that we had trouble naming. What we feel when subjected to abusive practices is real and undeniable, despite the common disbelief and questioning of the reality of victim experiences. Thus, we hope that engaging with this toolkit will be a healing process for anyone who reads it, and that it acts as an impetus to empathy and solidarity with one another and with all those who are vulnerable, in service of our goal of confronting abuse in all its forms.

Annex: Simplified Safeguarding Policy Example

Version Control

This part aims to control and document the processes of issuing, amending, and distributing the Code of Conduct during its period of use.

Approval of Versions

Version	Name	Signature	Position	Date
Version 1	Name of the person/body that approved the policy		Job description of the person who approved	Date of approval of Version 1

Amended Processes and Procedures Control

This part aims to control possible amendments to specific procedures included in the Code of Conduct.

Version	Procedure	Page number	Amendment (summary)	Application start date	Approval
Version 1	Name of the procedure amended	Location of procedure in the policy document	What type of amendment? Why was it made?	Expected date for the procedure to be implemented (preferably after the amendment is announced)	Who gave approval and when?

* The prototype of this policy was developed by the Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration (CTDC)

1. Policy Objective

Safeguarding policy is part of the public accountability frameworks by the organisation or the initiative. It aims to provide protection from any harm that may be caused to any person due to communication or interaction with the organisation or any of its employees. This includes any harm resulting from:

- Actions by personnel at the organisation/initiative.
- The design and implementation of programs, projects and activities by organisation/initiative

This policy explains (1) the organisation/initiative commitment to main safeguarding principles and (2) the procedures organisation/initiative follows for this purpose in the event of a complaint.

2. Scope of Application

- This policy is valid and applied to organisation/ initiative workers, including all permanent and contractual employees, consultants, service providers, volunteers, cleaners, security workers, and board members, regardless of their salaried or unsalaried status.
- The person in charge of this policy must ensure its dissemination among all workers.
- The person in charge of this policy this policy must ensure that it is available to all those affiliated or connected with the organisation/initiative.
- The person in charge of this policy must verify the scope of its application and document any breach of its principles or procedures.
- The person in charge of this policy must provide internal and external trainings and workshops on its contents and procedures.

3. Definition of Safeguarding

We define safeguarding as protection of all individuals and the public good from any harm that may result from abusive practices or negligence, whether at the level of individual behaviours or institutional practices.

The safeguarding policy of the organisation/initiative, therefore, deals with protection from harm that may result from:

- Behaviours and practices of any of its workers.
- Negligence or mismanagement of its activities and events.

All organisation/initiative personnel are obligated to confront all abusive practices and not be involved in them themselves. These practices include:

3.1 Exploitation

We define exploitation as the use of a person or a group of persons for their power, status, positionality for personal benefit through the use of force, duress, violence, coercion, deceit, or trickery that causes direct or indirect harm to another person or group of persons, or to public interest.

Our definition of exploitation includes:

1. Sexual exploitation, which includes demanding sexual favours in exchange for certain benefits, trafficking in persons for sexual purposes, child abuse, and forced sex in conditions of unequal power.
2. Exploitation of labour and economic resources, which includes child labour, trafficking in persons, trafficking in human organs, and appropriation of others' labour or and failure to recognise their efforts.

3.2 Assault

We define assault as any actual or attempted aggressive act that deliberately violates or threatens the physical space of a person or group of persons. Assault usually has a physical character, and in some cases it may be both physical and sexual.

Our definition of assault includes:

1. Sexual assault, which includes touching another person sexually without consent, and forced penetration with sexual organs or other equipment and devices into the vagina, anus, or mouth.
2. Physical assault, which includes hitting, kicking, using the body to threat, among others.
3. Verbal assault, which includes slurs, derogatory language, slander, and insults, and the use of raised voices as a means of intimidation.

3.3 Harassment

We define harassment as a group of unwanted abusive practices that are threatening to the recipient by their very nature. These behaviours need not be repeated in order to be considered harassment, nor must there be a discrepancy in power between the harasser and the harassed. It may take place directly or indirectly through addressing someone with talk. Harassment may occur face to face, through a third party, or through virtual or online.

Our definition of harassment includes:

1. Physical harassment, which includes patting the neck, shoulders, or other part of the body in a threatening way, any form of unwanted physical contact, and other inconvenient physical action.
2. Verbal harassment, which includes slurs, insults, and the use of unacceptable or unwanted words.
3. Sexual harassment, which includes any abusive and unwanted practice, action, or behaviour of a sexual nature to which a person or group of persons is exposed directly or indirectly. This can refer to non-physical sexual and/or verbal behaviours that cannot be classified as assault.

3.4 Bullying

We define bullying as any abusive practice or behaviour directed by an individual or group of individuals towards another person or group of persons. Bullying can be considered a form of harassment that is more frequent and systematic, and it aims not only to violate the receiving party, but also to belittle them.

Our definition of bullying includes:

1. Physical bullying, which includes any abusive practice or behaviour of a physical nature directed by a person or a group of persons in a targeting manner towards another person or a group of persons.
2. Verbal bullying, which includes any abusive, unwanted, and potentially belittling verbal expression directed by an individual or group of individuals in a targeted manner towards another person or a group of persons.
3. Indirect bullying, which includes systematic and frequent targeting of a person or group of persons with the aim of threatening or belittling by way of other parties and indirect means, such as spreading rumours and lies about the targeted person or group.
4. Cyberbullying, which includes the systematic and repeated targeting of a person or a group of persons through virtual means (i.e. via electronic communication, online, or on social media).
5. Intellectual bullying, which includes the use of knowledge or claims to knowledge in an extravagant or aggressive manner that aims to belittle the knowledge or practices of a person or group of people, considering them as intellectually inferior and not sophisticated enough.

3.5 Discrimination

We consider discrimination an abusive practice that may cause harm to a person or group of persons. The organisation/initiative and its workers are committed to confronting discrimination and not being involved in it. Our definition of discrimination covers the following protected characteristics:

- Discrimination based on race, colour or ethnicity
- Discrimination based on gender
- Discrimination based on age
- Discrimination based on special mental and physical needs
- Discrimination based on religion, faith and belief
- Discrimination based on gender or sex
- Discrimination based on social, economic and political class
- Discrimination based on marital status or caring status
- Discrimination based on immigration status, nationality and citizenship status
- Discrimination based on physical characteristics and dress.

4. Procedures for Receiving and Dealing with Complaints

The organisation/initiative receives different types of complaints, which are classified into sensitive complaints and general complaints.

General complaints include:

- Complaints about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the programs we implement.
- Complaints about the quality, effectiveness and relevance of our projects.
- Complaints about the methods, processes, and procedures used in implementation, design, budgeting, and project (mis)management.
- Complaints about recruitment, dismissal, promotion, and performance evaluations (if not related to discrimination).

Sensitive complaints include:

- Complaints related to exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying.
- Complaints related to fraud and financial and administrative corruption, such as bribery and the misallocation of funds.
- Complaints related to breaches of the organisation/initiative code of conduct and ethical values.
- Complaints related to discrimination or harm based on discrimination.

4.1 Reporting

The institution receives complaints through the following reporting channels:

These need to be determined by the organisation.

4.2 Handling Reports

When a complaint reaches the person responsible for receiving it, the following steps are taken:

1. Recording the complaint and documenting it in written format using our standard form. (Complaints Form).
2. Inform the complainant that the complaint has been received.
3. Classify the complaint according to its sensitivity.

4.2.1 General Complaints

If the complaint is classified as general, the following steps are taken:

1. Determine if the report is a complaint or feedback.
2. If it is feedback, the complainant should receive a response, either in the form of an explanation or an admission of error and the corrective actions that the organisation/initiative will undertake.
3. If the report is a complaint, the organisation/initiative must conduct internal accountability processes and then inform the complainant of the corrective actions it will take.
4. If the response is not satisfactory to the complainant or whistle-blower, the internal accountability process must be repeated along with self-reflection.
5. The organisation/initiative will appoint an external investigation committee in the event of failure to reach a response satisfactory to the complainants.

4.2.2 Sensitive Complaints

If a complaint is classified as sensitive, the following steps are taken:

1. Identify the risks related to the complainant such as retaliation, threat, etc.
2. Determine the necessary assistance and support to ensure the safety and health of complainants.
3. Determine if the incident requires an investigation.
4. Determine a timeline within which to deal with the incident along with the steps and procedures to be taken.
5. Inform the complainant of the steps and measures to be taken.
6. Conduct the investigation (preferably an external one).

4.3 Investigation

4.3.1 Investigation Goal

The organisation/initiative aims through the investigations to:

- Confirm that the abuse occurred,
- Verify that the perpetrator has been made aware of the extent of harm and damages,
- Identify the root causes of the abuse,
- Identify the systems that could have prevented the abuse,
- Identify the circumstances that might hinder the implementation of corrective actions,
- Offer concluding recommendations regarding policies, procedures, and processes that allow exploitation to occur,
- Offer concluding recommendations regarding subsequent steps that the organisations should follow.

4.3.2 Investigation Procedures

After confirming the complainants' desire to proceed with the investigation, the organisation/initiative will take the following steps:

1. Appoint investigators specialised the type of the reported abuse.
2. Periodically inform the complainants about the investigation process.

After receiving the results of the investigation, the organisation/initiative will take the following steps:

1. Determine the available procedural options.
2. Analyse the risks associated with the available procedural options.
3. Consult with the complainants and the person(s) who had been abused.
4. Decide on the measures.
5. Notify the complainants of the final decision.
6. Notify the accused of the final decision, granting the right to appeal while also taking practical steps within the organisation/initiative to ensure that the abuse will not occur again.

5. Final Measures

The organisation/initiative has the right to take corrective actions against its workers if they are found guilty of committing one of the abusive practices mentioned in its safeguarding policies and codes of conduct. The following is a list of the organisation/initiative corrective actions:

Type of violation	Corrective measures in chronological order based on frequency			Type of violation
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Violations related to exploitation				
Labour Exploitation	Verbal notice	Written notice	Final warning	Termination while maintaining contractual rights
Embezzlement	Termination and loss of any contractual rights			
Violations related to harassment				
Verbal harassment	Written notice	Final warning	Termination and loss of any contractual rights	
Sexual-physical harassment	Termination and loss of any contractual rights			

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