

Vulnerable people protection policy

Adopted by ADFM's Board of Directors

Last update: December 2023



INTRODUCTION

The Alliance for Women's Rights in Mauritania (ADFM), committed to the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM) and force-feeding practices, acknowledges the urgent need to ensure the safety, dignity, and respect for the fundamental rights of all vulnerable individuals with whom we interact. We firmly believe that every individual deserves to be treated with fairness, compassion, and consideration, regardless of their social status, age, gender, disability, or any other vulnerable situation.

This policy for the protection of vulnerable persons embodies our core values of integrity, respect for human rights, and accountability to our mission. It aims to prevent abuse, exploitation, neglect, and any form of violence against vulnerable individuals benefiting from our services or involved in our activities. We recognize that our fight against FGM and force-feeding requires a safe, inclusive, and protective environment where each individual can thrive and contribute fully to our shared mission. Therefore, we commit to raising awareness among all members of our organization, including staff, volunteers, and partners, about the crucial importance of this policy and training them on best practices for protecting vulnerable persons.

By adopting this policy, we pledge to be vigilant and respond promptly and appropriately to any reports of abuse or mistreatment. We will establish clear reporting and case management procedures, ensuring confidentiality and the safety of those involved. This policy for the protection of vulnerable persons is a statement of our commitment to upholding fundamental human rights and our determination to make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve. We acknowledge that this responsibility is shared by our entire organization, and each of us is called to act with responsibility and compassion.

As an association engaged in such a crucial fight, we hold ourselves accountable for the effective implementation of this policy and commit to regularly assessing its effectiveness to ensure maximum protection for vulnerable persons.

Policy objectives

The Alliance for Women's Rights in Mauritania (ADFM) is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and protective environment for all vulnerable individuals who interact with our organization. This policy aims to prevent any abuse, exploitation, neglect, or mistreatment of vulnerable persons, including women and children, and to ensure an appropriate response in the event of reporting such situations.

Important definitions

Vulnerable Persons:

Any person, child or adult, in a situation of vulnerability due to their age, gender, disability, health status, social or economic status, or any other particular situation, who is susceptible to an increased risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Sexual Harassment:

Any form of unwanted behavior of a sexual nature, including comments, gestures, unsolicited advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other form of similar harassment.

Physical Violence:

The use of physical force to cause harm, injury, or suffering to others. This may include acts such as hitting, slapping, pushing, and other forms of intentionally harmful physical contact.

Verbal Violence:

Verbal violence involves the use of hurtful, threatening, or offensive words to intimidate, humiliate, or emotionally harm a person. This may include insults, curses, sarcasm, or degrading remarks.

Psychological Violence:

Psychological violence aims to exert control and cause emotional harm by manipulating perceptions, feelings, or mental health. This can include social isolation, emotional manipulation, or constant threats.

Degrading Treatment:

Degrading treatment involves deliberately devaluing a person by minimizing their skills, ridiculing their efforts, or undermining their self-confidence. This can contribute to a deterioration of self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Bullying:

The use of fear, threat, or coercion to control or dominate a person. This can manifest physically, verbally, socially, or online, creating a hostile and harmful environment for the victim.

Guiding principles

ADFM is committed to upholding the following principles:

- a) **Respect and dignity:** all vulnerable persons must be treated with respect, dignity, and consideration, considering their rights and specific needs.
- b) **Prevention:** we have implemented preventive measures to reduce the risks of abuse, exploitation, and neglect towards vulnerable persons in all aspects of our activities.
- c) **Awareness and training:** we will raise awareness among all members of our organization, including staff, volunteers, and partners, regarding issues related to the protection of vulnerable persons and ensure they receive appropriate training on the subject.
- d) **Adequate response:** In the event of a report of abuse, exploitation, or neglect towards a vulnerable person, we will establish a clear and confidential procedure to manage the situation appropriately.

Responsibilities

a. Board of Directors:

The board of directors is responsible for overseeing and implementing the policy on the protection of vulnerable persons. It will ensure that adequate resources are allocated to guarantee the safety and protection of vulnerable persons.

b. Staff and volunteers:

All staff members and volunteers are obligated to adhere to this policy and to report any suspected incidents of abuse, exploitation, or neglect towards a vulnerable person in accordance with the reporting procedure.

c. Beneficiaries:

The beneficiaries of our services have the right to receive respectful and protective treatment. We will inform them of their rights and how to report any incidents of mistreatment or abuse.

d. Complaints officer:

Ariane Gyenizse is responsible for receiving and managing complaints related to the protection of vulnerable persons, including cases of sexual harassment.

Email: ariane.gyenizse@gmail.com

Phone: 34 72 80 63

Reporting Procedure

Any individual, whether an employee, volunteer, member of the organization, or any other person aware of an incident of abuse, exploitation, neglect, or mistreatment towards vulnerable persons, is obligated to report the incident immediately to Ariane Gyenizse. This includes various forms of violence such as physical, psychological, verbal, sexual (including sexual harassment), bullying, belittlement, or any other form of violence directed towards vulnerable persons.

A dedicated form is accessible on the ADFM website.

Investigation and corrective measures

Any complaint will undergo a thorough and impartial investigation led by Ariane Gyenizse. Corrective measures will be promptly taken upon confirmation of an incident, including disciplinary actions and, if necessary, collaboration with the relevant authorities.

Awareness and training

All employees, volunteers, and organization members will be sensitized to issues related to the protection of vulnerable people and will receive regular training on preventing sexual harassment.

Policy Update

This policy will be reviewed regularly, at least once a year, to ensure its alignment with best practices in protecting vulnerable persons.

Communication and Availability

This policy will be accessible to all organization members and communicated transparently. Ariane Gyenizse's contact details will be regularly updated and easily accessible.

Adherence

By signing this **Vulnerable People Protection Policy** we express our commitment to the fundamental principles of safety, respect, and responsibility towards the most vulnerable individuals.

Oumou Oumar Bâ
General Director

Haby Mamadou Dia
President of the Board of Directors