

Safeguarding and Protection Policy

Refugees International Women Empowerment Foundation (R.I.W.E.)

Varna, Bulgaria

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1. Purpose

Refugees International Women Empowerment Foundation (R.I.W.E.) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in all its activities, projects and partnerships.

This Safeguarding and Protection Policy establishes the principles and procedures to prevent and respond to harm, abuse, exploitation, harassment, and discrimination in all organisational activities.

Given the organisation's focus on displaced populations, including women and children affected by war, migration, gender-based violence (GBV), and trafficking in human beings (THB), safeguarding is a core operational principle of R.I.W.E.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- board members
- staff members
- consultants and experts
- volunteers
- project partners
- contractors and service providers
- participants in R.I.W.E. activities

The policy covers all activities organised or supported by R.I.W.E., including research, community work, advocacy, cultural initiatives, trainings, and events.

3. Safeguarding Principles

R.I.W.E. is guided by the following safeguarding principles:

Do No Harm

All activities must prioritise the safety, dignity and wellbeing of participants.

Respect and Non-Discrimination

All individuals must be treated with dignity regardless of gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability, migration status, or other characteristics.

Victim-Centred Approach

Responses to incidents prioritise the needs, confidentiality and autonomy of affected individuals.

Confidentiality

Sensitive information must be handled responsibly and shared only when necessary for protection purposes.

Accountability

All individuals working with or for R.I.W.E. share responsibility for safeguarding.

4. Forms of Misconduct Covered by This Policy

This policy addresses, but is not limited to:

- sexual harassment
- gender-based violence
- exploitation or abuse of vulnerable individuals
- trafficking-related exploitation
- psychological abuse or intimidation
- discrimination and harassment
- abuse of power or authority
- retaliation against individuals who report misconduct

5. Protection of Vulnerable Groups

R.I.W.E. frequently works with vulnerable populations including:

- displaced women
- refugee and migrant communities
- survivors of violence or trafficking
- youth and young adults in vulnerable social situations

Additional care must be taken to ensure:

- informed consent in participation
- culturally sensitive communication
- trauma-informed approaches
- avoidance of re-traumatisation

6. Code of Conduct

All individuals representing or working with R.I.W.E. must:

- treat all participants with respect and dignity
- avoid any behaviour that may be abusive, exploitative, or discriminatory
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- respect confidentiality of sensitive information
- report safeguarding concerns when they arise

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited:

- sexual exploitation or abuse
- harassment or discrimination
- coercion or intimidation
- misuse of organisational authority or influence
- retaliation against whistleblowers

7. Reporting Mechanisms

Any safeguarding concern or incident should be reported as soon as possible.

Reports may be submitted:

- directly to the Founder or designated safeguarding contact
- through written communication (email)
- through confidential discussion with organisational leadership

Reports may be made by:

- staff or volunteers
- project participants
- partners or collaborators
- third parties who witness or become aware of misconduct

Anonymous reports may also be considered.

8. Response to Safeguarding Concerns

When a safeguarding concern is raised, R.I.W.E. will:

1. acknowledge receipt of the report
2. assess potential risks and urgency
3. ensure the safety and wellbeing of the affected individual
4. review the situation confidentially
5. take appropriate corrective measures where necessary

Actions may include:

- internal review
- mediation or corrective measures
- termination of collaboration
- referral to relevant authorities where required

9. Safeguarding in Partnerships and Projects

R.I.W.E. promotes safeguarding standards in all collaborations.

Where possible:

- partners are encouraged to adopt safeguarding policies
- safeguarding principles are integrated into project design
- events and activities follow safety and protection protocols

10. Awareness and Training

R.I.W.E. supports awareness of safeguarding principles among individuals involved in its activities.

Measures may include:

- internal briefings on safeguarding standards
- discussions on gender-based violence prevention
- collaboration with experts on trauma-informed practices

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be periodically reviewed and updated as the organisation grows and develops new programmes and partnerships.

Approved by:

Ivanna Khodos

Founder

Refugees International Women Empowerment Foundation (R.I.W.E.)