

Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy

Purpose and Scope:

The EJ-YMCA considers sexual exploitation and abuse as a human-rights issue, besides it being a criminal offence. Therefore, it is committed to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse within its facilities, within the framework of its programs and interventions, and within its beneficiary populations.

It is important to note that while women and children are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse, all beneficiary populations, including young men, are concerned. The aim of the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy of the EJ-YMCA is to ensure that people are aware of such acts, and mechanisms are in place to prevent and sanction these acts at any point.

The policy applies to the EJ-YMCA as an institution and to all those collaborating with it, and notably service providers and partners. For people placed under the EJ-YMCA's responsibility (staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, interns, beneficiaries, people using facilities of the EJ-YMCA, ...), this policy applies to all situations, professional or otherwise, during and outside working hours. It is the EJ-YMCA's responsibility to ensure that everyone is informed of the existence and content of this policy. Therefore, an explicit clause referring to this policy is included in all contracts and partnership agreements produced by the EJ-YMCA, requiring contractors, suppliers, consultants and sub-partners to commit to a zero-tolerance policy and to take measures to prevent and respond to the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It is as well mandatory that any individual who joins the EJ-YMCA as a staff member or volunteer, receives training on this policy and signs a formal declaration to commit to abide by this policy.

The EJ-YMCA assigns a representative of the Human Resources Department as a focal point to receive and process complaints and incidents related to violations of this policy. The EJ-YMCA ensures participation in relevant networks specialized in coordinating efforts in the field of prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment at the national level.

Terminology:

- **Sexual exploitation and abuse:** is a serious misconduct committed by volunteers or staff against any member of the community that may include sexual harassment, abuse of power for the purpose of obtaining sexual favors, rape, sexual assault, or sexual relations with a minor (under the age of 18), profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another, among others. This includes non-contact and online sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Sexual harassment:** includes physical assaults of a sexual nature, sexual advances, sexual proposals or comments with sexual connotations, preferential treatment or promise of preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favors, intimidation, threats or barriers to career progression because of the gender of the person concerned, retaliations in response to a sexual harassment complaint, etc. This is committed among volunteers and staff.

Principles and Obligations:

- It is prohibited to participate directly or indirectly in sexual exploitation and abuse as defined in this policy.
- The EJ-YMCA considers such acts as serious misconduct, which may constitute grounds for disciplinary actions.
- Under no circumstances shall EJ-YMCA staff or volunteers take undue advantage of their professional position for their personal interest or to obtain a favor of a sexual nature.
- The EJ-YMCA prohibits any acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or sexual exploitation and forbids the exchange of money, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex,

including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior towards its beneficiaries.

- The EJ-YMCA strictly forbids sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18). Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.
- Staff who deliver outreach services directly to beneficiaries have a duty not only to abstain from having sexual relationships with the people who receive their services, but also to report any instance where they may suspect or detect signs of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Any suspicion of sexual exploitation and abuse must be reported immediately to the EJ-YMCA Human Resources Department.

Reporting violations:

EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners, guests, suppliers, ... should promptly report any potential violations of this policy to the EJ-YMCA Human Resources Department.

Reporting violations should follow the Complaints Mechanism set in the Accountability Framework of the EJ-YMCA. Violations to this policy are considered as Sensitive Complaints that require utmost confidentiality, strict follow-up procedures and the engagement of representatives of the Board of Directors as well as the Senior Management of the EJ-YMCA.

The Human Resources Department will follow the set mechanism to deal with the complaint, and arrange for the prompt protection of and support to the victim of the assault. Should the victim of the assault request any specialized services like: medical care, safe shelter, legal advice, psychological support, etc. the Human Resources Department will make necessary referrals to relevant governmental bodies.

There will be no punishment or other retaliation for the reporting of a violation of this policy. If the person providing this information requests anonymity, this request will be respected to the extent that doing so does not impede any investigation, and unless it is a case of clear and imminent danger to the individual in question or another person.

In the case of sexual exploitation and abuse committed against a child beneficiary or participant within any of the EJ-YMCA activities, then the case should be reported to the authorized relevant Child Protection Networks within the Ministry of Social Development within the first 24 hours.

Breaches to the Policy:

Failure of any of the EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, partners, guests, suppliers, ... to comply with this Policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action according to the EJ-YMCA Human Resources Manual, which, depending on the circumstances, may include termination of employment or of the relationship, while reporting the incident to the relevant authorities.

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This policy was endorsed by the Board of Director's in November 2022