

ASPIRE DEBATE RWANDA

**SAFEGUARDING
POLICY
2025**



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www.aspiredebaterwanda.org

ADR SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Aspire Debate Rwanda (ADR) is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all individuals, particularly the young people we empower. This Safeguarding Policy aims to protect children, youth, at-risk Individuals, and all beneficiaries of ADR's programs from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. Our approach aligns with international conventions and national legislation on safeguarding, ensuring adherence to global and local standards.

ADR adopts a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding violations and seeks to create a culture where safeguarding responsibilities are understood, upheld, and integrated into every aspect of our work.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to:

- ♣ Prevent and protect young people and other vulnerable individuals who interact with Aspire Debate Rwanda from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.
- ♣ Establish a safe environment for beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and partners.
- ♣ Outline clear procedures for identifying, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- ♣ Promote a culture of safety, respect, inclusion, accountability and continuous improvement in safeguarding practices across all ADR operations.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This safeguarding policy applies to all individuals associated with ADR, including staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, board members, partners, donors and program beneficiaries. It covers all activities, programs, operations and partnership conducted or supported by Aspire Debate Rwanda within Rwanda and/or beyond.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This safeguarding policy is informed by and complies with the following international and national frameworks:

International Conventions:

- ♣ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989).
- ♣ United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948).
- ♣ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1990).
- ♣ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

National Legislation:

- ♣ Rwanda's Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child (2018).
- ♣ Law No. 59/2008 on the Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence.
- ♣ Guidelines from the National Child Development Agency (NCDA).

PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY:

ADR's safeguarding policy is built upon the following principles:

- ♣ Do no harm: ADR prioritizes the safety and well-being of all individuals and ensures that its activities and interactions do not cause harm in form of abuse, exploitations, or neglect.
- ♣ Accountability: All staff and associated personnel are responsible for upholding safeguarding practices and reporting concerns.
- ♣ Equality and Inclusion: ADR promotes a safe and respectful environment where everyone enjoy equal rights to protection, regardless of age, gender, ability, or background, feels valued and protected.
- ♣ Confidentiality: Safeguarding concerns are handled with sensitivity and discretion, ensuring the protection of those involved.
- ♣ Best interests of the beneficiary: Decisions and actions prioritize the well-being and dignity of children, youth, and vulnerable Individuals.
- ♣ Empowerment: We promote the empowerment of young people (beneficiaries), our staff, volunteers, interns and encourage them to speak up against harm observed.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- ♣ Leadership and Governance: ADR's leadership is responsible for establishing and monitoring safeguarding policies, ensuring compliance, and fostering a culture of accountability.
- ♣ Staff and Volunteers: All personnel must complete safeguarding training, adhere to the policy, and report any concerns.
- ♣ Partners and Contractors: ADR requires all partners and contractors to commit to safeguarding standards and integrate them into their operations.
- ♣ Safeguarding Officers: Serve as the primary contact for safeguarding concerns, provide guidance, and ensure timely action.

SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

i. Recruitment and Training.

- ♣ All staff, volunteers, and associated personnel must undergo background checks and safeguarding training before engaging in ADR activities.
- ♣ Ongoing safeguarding training will be provided to reinforce knowledge and address emerging risks.

ii. Safe Programming

- ♣ Safeguarding risk assessments will be conducted for all programs and activities.
- ♣ Clear codes of conduct will be established and communicated to all participants.
- ♣ Child-friendly and youth-sensitive approaches will be integrated into all initiatives.

iii. Reporting Mechanisms

- ♣ ADR will establish accessible, confidential, and youth-friendly reporting channels, including hotlines, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms.
- ♣ All reports of safeguarding concerns will be addressed promptly and thoroughly.

iv. Incident Response and Management

- ♣ A dedicated safeguarding focal point shall oversee the investigation and resolution of safeguarding incidents.
- ♣ Appropriate actions, including disciplinary measures and referrals to external authorities, will be taken to address violations.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

- ♣ **Identify and Document:** Recognize signs of harm or abuse and document them in detail.
- ♣ **Report:** Share concerns immediately with ADR's safeguarding focal point or designated reporting channel.
- ♣ **Investigate:** ADR will conduct a thorough, fair, and confidential investigation of the reported incident.
- ♣ **Respond:** Appropriate actions, including support for victims and corrective measures for perpetrators, will be taken.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- ♣ The safeguarding policy will be integrated into ADR's organizational culture and communicated to all associates of ADR via their respective e-mail addresses. This policy forms an integral part of all contractual agreements between Aspire Debate Rwanda and its associates.
- ♣ A safeguarding committee, led by the focal point (safeguarding officer), will oversee policy implementation and compliance.

REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Reporting mechanisms will be done in the consideration of the following; -

- ♣ A dedicated electronic mail is place safeguarding concerns: safe@aspiredebaterwanda.org
- ♣ You can use the Executive Director phone number: +250786443477 or his e-mail: dntambiye@aspiredebaterwanda.org, to report the concerns. However, in-case the concerns are associated with the Executive Director, then matter should be reported to Board Chair or Vice Chair. Their contacts can be shared through reception of Aspire Debate Rwanda.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

ADR shall observe the following in relation to monitoring and evaluation of this policy:

- ♣ Conduct regular audits to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding measures.
- ♣ Gather feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders to improve safeguarding practices.
- ♣ Update the policy annually to align with evolving best practices and legislation.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed and updated every two years or sooner if necessary to reflect changes in legislation, organizational needs, or best practices.

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Aspire Debate Rwanda is committed to:

- ♣ **Creating Safe Spaces:** Ensuring all programs and activities are conducted in safe and supportive environments.
- ♣ **Capacity Building:** Providing training and resources for staff, volunteers, and partners to recognize and respond to safeguarding issues effectively.
- ♣ **Preventing Harm:** Conducting rigorous background checks for all staff and volunteers.
- ♣ **Collaboration:** Working with stakeholders, partners, and communities to uphold safeguarding standards.
- ♣ **Clear Reporting Mechanisms:** Establishing accessible channels for reporting concerns or incidents.
- ♣ **Ensuring all reports are taken seriously, investigated promptly, and addressed effectively.**

ADR remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the dignity and rights of all individuals. Through collective action, accountability, and adherence to this policy, ADR aims to create a safe and empowering environment for Rwanda's youth and vulnerable populations.

DEFINITIONS:

- ♣ **Abuse** refers to any action or behaviour that intentionally causes harm, suffering, or distress to another person or group of individuals. It can occur in various forms, including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, or neglectful acts, and often involves an imbalance of power, control, or trust.
- ♣ **A Child** as defined in alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and for the purposes of this Policy, refers to any individual be it a girl, boy, young woman, young man, or a child of any other gender identity under the age of 18, as outlined in Article 1 of the UNCRC.
- ♣ **Associate** encompasses a diverse group of individuals who are engaged either on a paid or voluntary basis in supporting or collaborating with Aspire Debate Rwanda. This includes, but is not limited to, board members, volunteers, interns, sponsors, researchers, donors, consultants, contractors, staff, as well as representatives from partner organizations and local governments operating under a partnership agreement with Aspire Debate Rwanda. These individuals share a commitment to advancing the mission and objectives of ADR through their roles and contributions.
- ♣ **At-Risk Individual:** An person aged 18 or older who, due to disability, age, illness, or marginalization, is more vulnerable to harm.

- ♣ **Exploitation** is an act of unfairly taking advantage of another person for personal gain or benefit, often by manipulating or abusing their resources, vulnerability, or circumstances.
- ♣ **Harm** refers to any adverse impact on a child's or young person's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being. It can result from abuse or exploitation, whether deliberate or unintentional.
- ♣ **Neglect:** The failure to provide necessary care, assistance, or attention.
- ♣ **Safeguarding** refers to the assurance of safety and well-being of every individual by protecting them from harm. This includes shielding against bullying, harassment, exploitation, abuse, or any actions that inflict physical, emotional, or psychological suffering.
- ♣ **Sexual Abuse** refers to any actual or threatened physical act of a sexual nature, carried out through force, coercion, or exploitation of unequal power dynamics.
- ♣ **Zero-Tolerance Approach:** No tolerance for safeguarding violations, regardless of intent or context.