



Lizu Community Network

SAFEGUARDING AND SHEAR POLICY (2025 Edition)

INTRODUCTION

This policy ensures the protection of all people especially children, women, and vulnerable groups from sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, and related misconduct. Lizu maintains a zero-tolerance stance toward all forms of SHEAR violations. As an organization promoting civic participation, digital inclusion, and social accountability, Lizu recognizes its duty to protect everyone from harm resulting from its staff, partners, or programs.

This **Safeguarding and SHEAR Policy** (Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, Abuse, and Related Misconduct) defines how Lizu prevents, responds to, and manages risks of abuse, ensuring accountability and survivor-centered responses.

1. Purpose and Scope

The policy outlines Lizu's commitment to safeguarding all persons affected by its programs.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Prevent sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse in all organizational activities.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents.
- Promote a culture of dignity, equality, and respect across Lizu's operations.
- Ensure alignment with national laws and donor safeguarding frameworks.

Applies to:

- All employees (full-time, part-time, volunteers, interns)
- Board members and consultants
- Partners, contractors, and suppliers engaged by Lizu
- Any individuals representing Lizu in any capacity

Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is guided by:

- **The Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act (2011)**
- **The Children's Code Act (2022)**
- **The Employment Code Act (2019)**
- **The Penal Code of Zambia**
- **The Data Protection Act (2021)**
- **Donor Safeguarding Standards**

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Safeguarding	Measures to protect people, particularly vulnerable groups, from harm, abuse, and exploitation arising from Lizu's work.
Sexual Harassment	Any unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.
Sexual Exploitation	Abuse of a position of trust, power, or vulnerability for sexual purposes, including profiting from such abuse.
Sexual Abuse	Physical intrusion or activity of a sexual nature without consent.
SHEAR	Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, Abuse, and Related Misconduct.
Survivor	A person who has experienced sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse.
Perpetrator	A person who commits or is accused of committing SHEAR-related misconduct.

3. Guiding Principles

1. **Zero Tolerance:** Lizu will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse.
2. **Survivor-Centered:** The needs, rights, and wishes of survivors guide all actions.
3. **Confidentiality:** All reports and investigations are handled discreetly.
4. **Accountability:** All personnel are responsible for maintaining safe environments.
5. **Non-Retaliation:** No person shall face reprisal for reporting a concern in good faith.
6. **Inclusivity:** Special attention to marginalized groups—children, youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

4. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Directors	Approves policy, oversees compliance, receives annual safeguarding reports.
Executive Director	Ensures implementation, assigns Safeguarding Focal Point, and ensures incident response.
Safeguarding Focal Point (SFP)	Receives reports, maintains confidentiality, coordinates investigations and referrals.
Supervisors/Managers	Promote awareness, create safe work environments, support survivors.
All Staff and Partners	Read, sign, and comply with this policy; immediately report any concerns.

5. Prevention Measures

Lizu will:

Conduct **background and reference checks** for all recruits.

- Include safeguarding and SHEAR clauses in all employment and partnership contracts.
- Train staff, volunteers, and partners annually on safeguarding, gender, and power dynamics.
- Ensure **safe digital and physical spaces** during Lizu activities.
- Display safeguarding commitments and reporting contacts at all offices and community events.

6. Reporting and Response

Any suspected or actual SHEAR incident must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or Safeguarding Focal Point. Reports can be verbal, written, or anonymous.

Investigations will follow a survivor-centered and confidential process.

Reporting Channels:

- Verbal or written report to the Safeguarding Focal Point (SFP).
- Anonymous reporting via phone, email, or suggestion box.
- Escalation to the Executive Director or Board Chairperson if the SFP is implicated.

Timeframe:

- Reports must be acknowledged within **48 hours**.
- Preliminary assessment conducted within **7 days**.
- Full investigation completed within **30 days** where feasible.

Confidentiality:

Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis. Files are securely stored by the SFP.

Referral:

Where necessary, survivors shall be referred to appropriate medical, psychosocial, or legal services in collaboration with local GBV support providers.

Survivor Support and Case Management

Lizu commits to:

- Providing compassionate, non-judgmental, and confidential response.
- Offering immediate psychosocial and medical referrals.
- Supporting access to legal remedies where appropriate.
- Respecting survivor choice in reporting to authorities.
- Avoiding re-traumatization through repeated questioning.

7. Disciplinary Measures

Confirmed SHEAR violations result in disciplinary action, including termination and legal reporting. Lizu will cooperate with law enforcement where required.

Investigation and Disciplinary Actions

The Executive Director appoints a **Safeguarding Investigation Team** (SFP + HR + 1 Board member).

Investigations are impartial, evidence-based, and timely.

Outcomes may include:

- Verbal or written warning
- Suspension
- Termination
- Reporting to law enforcement

Donors will be informed in cases involving their projects.

9. Partner and Contractor Compliance

- All implementing partners, consultants, and suppliers must adhere to Lizu's safeguarding standards.
- Contracts must include SHEAR clauses.
- Non-compliance may result in termination or blacklisting.

10. Monitoring, Review, and Learning

The policy will be reviewed biennially. Lessons from implementation will inform continuous improvement and training updates.

- Safeguarding performance reviewed quarterly by management.
- Annual report presented to the Board summarizing cases, actions, and lessons.
- Policy reviewed every two years based on implementation feedback.

11. Digital Safeguarding

- Lizu staff must use technology responsibly to protect privacy and dignity.
- No sharing of personal data, images, or stories without consent.
- Content must not exploit, sexualize, or endanger beneficiaries.
- All must adhere to the **Lizu Community Network Information Security Policy**

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All reports will be handled discreetly. Survivors will receive appropriate psychosocial and legal support in collaboration with relevant service providers.

- Personal information related to safeguarding cases must be encrypted and stored securely.
- Only authorized persons (SFP, Executive Director, Board Chairperson) may access records.
- Data sharing with donors or law enforcement follows consent and confidentiality rules.

Reference can be made to the NDA policy and form

13. Safeguarding During Field Activities

- Field activities must include gender-sensitive planning and risk assessment.
- At least two staff present during interactions with minors or vulnerable persons.
- Community entry meetings must clarify Lizu's safeguarding commitment.

14. Whistleblowing and Protection from Retaliation

- Any staff, volunteer, or community member can raise a concern without fear.
- Retaliation or victimization of whistleblowers will lead to disciplinary action.
- False reporting made with malicious intent is itself misconduct.

Annex 1: Incident Reporting Form