



Protection Policy for Vulnerable People

December/2021

In carrying out its mission for a more just and sustainable world, Instituto Escolhas is dedicated to producing knowledge that helps eliminate imbalances, such as the depletion of natural resources, extreme poverty, and social vulnerability.

While working to reduce the vulnerability of populations, its comprehensive approach leads to recognition of the importance of how its members relate to each other individually, ensuring that when performing their activities they do not get involved, even involuntarily, in episodes of abuse, violence, or discrimination because of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic dependence, or asymmetry of knowledge, or because of any physical or mental disability.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, we will adopt the following definitions:

- Vulnerable person: any child, adolescent, or adult who, because of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, illness, social class, or the context in which he/she finds himself/herself, is unable to protect himself/herself from significant harm of any nature.
- Child: someone under 12 (twelve) years old.
- Adolescent: someone between 12 (twelve) and 18 (eighteen) years old.
- Adult: someone over 18 (eighteen) years old.
- Elderly person: someone 60 (sixty) or more years old.
- Gender: the socially-constructed difference between men and women.
- Sexual orientation: an indication of the sex or gender to which a person feels physically or emotionally attracted.
- Race: a phenotypical criterion according to the person's self-declaration, and in accordance with the IBGE's definition for the Brazilian population, which may be white, black, brown, indigenous, or yellow.
- Ethnicity: a group that differs from others because of its common identity characteristics, such as culture, religion, language, history, and others.
- Disabled person: a person who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with one or more barriers, may impede their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.



- Knowledge asymmetry: when one person has more information or knowledge about a topic than another.
- Economic dependence: an economic relationship in which there is a bond of dependence between people and institutions.
- Collaborator: a person who contributes to the functioning of the Institute with their work. They may work internally (an associate, board director, officer, or employee) or externally (a consultant or any other supplier of goods or services).

Vulnerability exposure situations

With the aim of building a safe and healthy environment in the relationships between its employees and vulnerable people, both within the Institute and outside, it is important to mention some of the situations that illustrate the conduct that this policy intends to inhibit.

Employee vulnerability

- A lack of respect for and/or discrimination against the Institute's employees.
- Exposure and damage to the social and cultural integrity of employees as a result of their interactions with external entities, such as event participants, suppliers, partners, the press, and the general public.

The vulnerability of the public involved in studies

- Inappropriate use by the Institute of information and results that are obtained in studies that may expose the individuals involved.
- Disclosure of the results of the Institute's studies that may put the public or the individuals mentioned or involved in the research at risk.

The vulnerability of event participants

- The exclusion of any participants because of discrimination.
- Exposure to sensitive topics or events.
- Lack of accessibility.



The vulnerability of interviewees

- Within the scope of the field research that is conducted as a result of the Institute's studies, the adoption of attitudes on the part of employees that may lead to a lack of respect for the interviewees and/or discrimination against them.
- Inappropriate use of the information and results obtained in interviews.

The vulnerability of suppliers

- Exploitation by the Institute of the economic dependence of a supplier.

The Institute's methodology considers the interaction with the various actors that represent the field studied, creating a context that is prone to risk exposure. The disrespectful and discriminatory positioning of guests and people in general in these situations should not be understood as negligence or agreement on the part of the Institute.

Standard of conduct of the Instituto Escolhas

In order to avoid situations of vulnerability, the Institute adopts procedures and takes care when operationalizing its projects and activities generally. It assumes, therefore, the following commitments:

- The Instituto Escolhas leaders and its staff must act to ensure that any commitments to protect vulnerable people are complied with and guide their behavior in accordance with this document.
- The Institute must raise the awareness of all its employees, train them and offer them permanent support for the proper practice of this policy, and of its other policies.
- The Instituto Escolhas team must be carefully selected. It should be even more rigid in the case of employees who carry out fieldwork. Commitment to and respect for this policy and the Institute's other policies must be a condition for professionals remaining in the organization.
- The Institute will prioritize having relationships with partners who share the values and practices established in this and other policies of the organization.
- The Institute must make every effort to understand any social and cultural peculiarities of the contexts in which its studies are carried out, the aim being to reduce the risk of discriminatory and disrespectful situations.



- No documentation that is prepared by the Institute must contain any form of discrimination or include content that could expose vulnerable people.
- The information obtained from the Institute's research and field activities (interviews, events, and work meetings) must be used in a way that guarantees people's privacy, without exposing them or putting them at risk. All data and documents, as well as the identity of interviewees, must be protected, and any misuse will be subject to the sanctions determined by law.
- No employee shall use their position to induce vulnerable people to adopt behaviors that are potentially harmful to them.
- The Institute must not use its economic power to impose commercial conditions in negotiations; it must always adopt a relationship of respect and professionalism with suppliers.
- Events organized by the Institute must guarantee access for people with disabilities.
- When practicing the Institute's activities absolute priority must be given to people's privacy and their physical and psychological integrity.

Complaints

Since the Institute understands how relevant topics like protecting the vulnerable are, it has a series of internal policies that, when taken together, reflect the practices that the institution defends for its employees and partners.

Any person who feels their rights have been affected or violated, or who is aware of the violation of this or other policies, can file a complaint following the guidelines of the Complaints Policy, which is available on the institution's website.

(<https://www.escolhas.org/en/transparencia>).