



## **ROOT AND BRANCH CHANGE**

### **WORKING ABROAD POLICY**

#### **Safety POLICY for the support and care of Trustees, staff and volunteers traveling or working abroad on behalf of the organisation**

Root and Branch Change is committed to the safety and security of its beneficiaries and for all people operating on its behalf. The purpose of this policy is to highlight areas for special attention in regard to those traveling from the UK to South Africa to undertake activities for and on behalf of the organisation.

The **SAFEGUARDING POLICY** of the organisation applies to all persons connected to Root and Branch Change and must be read, understood and adhered to by all whenever they are engaged in the activities of the organisation, whether in their home country, in transit or in South Africa. In all situations, trustees, staff, volunteers or associates must work and behave in a manner consistent with the safeguarding provisions enshrined in the laws of both the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa whether or not they are specifically referenced in the organisation's Safeguarding Policy or the Working Abroad Policy.

#### **1. SAFETY AND SECURITY OF TRUSTEES, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ABROAD:**

Prior to any project or activity being established in South Africa, the organisation will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all identifiable risks have been assessed, and that there is a safe, and politically stable environment in which they can operate. This will be informed by published guidance of the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regarding safety and security, along with current information from our main partners and the local authorities in the area of operation. A copy of relevant risk assessments will be available to all those who are traveling abroad on behalf of the organisation. The organisation will maintain contact with the British High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa during all deployments in South Africa.

#### **2. NAMED RESPONSIBLE OFFICER**

The organisation will name a trained member of its team, either a trustee or staff member, to be the "Responsible Officer" for each overseas deployment. We will not delegate this responsibility to an external contractor or third party. The Responsible Officer will act as the safety lead for those deployed on the project for which they take responsibility.

### **3. HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILST ABROAD**

The physical, emotional, and mental health of all personnel operating on behalf of the organisation will remain a top priority at all times. All persons being deployed on the organisation's business overseas will be encouraged to consult with their GP prior to deployment. In some cases, the organisation may insist on a medical examination being conducted to ensure that the person is fit to travel and to undertake their assignment. No one will be permitted to travel on behalf of the organisation without adequate travel/work insurance, particularly covering medical costs whilst in South Africa.

The organisation maintains a list of approved clinics, hospitals and medical practitioners in its theatre of operations.

### **4. TRAINING, ADVICE AND SUPPORT PRIOR TO DEPARTURE**

All personnel, whether paid or unpaid, will receive thorough pre-departure training, either one-to-one or as a team (determined by the nature of the deployment) from suitably qualified and experienced staff, covering all known aspects of the assignment and the in-country arrangements. This training will include:

- 4.1.** Health – including vaccinations, emergency medical care and health risk mitigation
- 4.2.** Personal safety
- 4.3.** Safeguarding, reporting and whistle-blowing arrangements. A summary of essential safeguarding information will be contained in a “Safeguarding Pocket Guide” issued, along with full details of policies and procedures, during this training process.
- 4.4.** Travel awareness – to and within the deployment area
- 4.5.** Orientation and awareness of the deployment location, including any identified risks
- 4.6.** Project-specific issues, including information of local personnel, cultural sensitivities, and potential threats
- 4.7.** Essential contact information – how to seek help and support.

### **5. IDENTITY CARD**

All personnel acting for or on behalf of the organisation will be issued with an official Root and Branch Change identity card bearing their photograph, together with a lanyard, after they have passed through all selection and safeguarding processes prior to their deployment, wherever that may be. This photo ID is issued for the added protection of the cardholder, colleagues and beneficiaries. It must be carried whenever the cardholder is operating on any activity of the organisation, and must be available for inspection on demand. The photo ID will include details of any limitations, restrictions or exclusions specific to the individual's scope of operation on the organisations behalf.

### **6. ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

All trustees, staff and volunteers will be met personally on arrival in South Africa for their first deployment (at least), by a representative of the organisation who is clearly identified and carrying a sign bearing the name “Root and Branch Change”. The representative will have an official Root and Branch Change identity card bearing their photograph. If the person arriving has any doubts about the identity of the representative, they must call the emergency number

given to them on their own identity card for verification *before* leaving the airport terminal or getting into a vehicle.

## **7. SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ACCOMMODATION**

Accommodation for those deployed will be arranged and confirmed prior to departure. The type and location of the accommodation will be determined by the nature and duration of the assignment, but, in all circumstances, the organisation will strive to provide accommodation that is as comfortable and safe as can reasonably be expected, and appropriate to the nature of the organisation's mission. All accommodation will be inspected in advance and subject to a risk assessment. The organisation maintains a list of approved accommodation providers and updates it based on the feedback received by returning personnel.

## **8. FULL IN-COUNTRY INDUCTION**

All persons deployed by the organisation on overseas projects and assignments will receive a thorough induction when they arrive and prior to the start of the activity in which they are deployed. This will repeat and emphasise issues covered in clause 4 above pertaining to safeguarding obligations and the safety and security of the person deployed and give full details of the project or assignment being undertaken.

## **9. TWO-PART EXIT INTERVIEW AND POST-PROJECT CARE**

The organisation places very high value on the feedback and insights of those who have undertaken activities and projects with it or on its behalf. Each person will be given an exit interview at the end of their assignment whilst still in South Africa, where they will be encouraged to share their experiences of the deployment, including highlights as well as disappointments and frustrations. Upon return to the UK, there will be a second interview, in most cases after one week and before three weeks of their return, so they can share their experience and reflections further. This information will be considered seriously by trustees and, where appropriate, feedback will be provided to the individual.

The organisation is aware that many returnees can struggle with a reverse "culture shock", due in part to the situations of suffering and poverty that they may have encountered. We pledge to do all possible to help those returning from assignments to readjust in a positive and affirming manner. Where necessary, the organisation will arrange professional psychological support.