

# **Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration Code of Practice**

This Code of Practice should be condoned by anyone joining IDVRM in any capacity or affiliation, paid or unpaid

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## Description of IDVRM

The Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration (IDVRM) is a highly specialised **evidence** and **practice** platform that produces innovative research and intervention approaches to domestic violence and interconnected forms of violence in religious, migrant and ethnic minority contexts internationally.

Recognising that gender-based violence approaches historically marginalised **cultural** and **religious worldviews** and imposed external thinking and solutions, we develop responses to domestic violence and interconnected forms of violence in **development**, **humanitarian** and **migration contexts** that are centred on the lived realities and religio-cultural contexts of diverse communities.

Our approach is guided by the [Project dIdI//ፌልድላ Model](#) premised on **decolonial** reflexivity, **interdisciplinarity**, cultural and **theological** knowledge and genuine **co-creation** involving **grassroots** organisations, women's platforms and faith-based stakeholders. We operate an international network of researchers and practitioners internationally and have active programmes in East Africa and Europe.

## Our Mission

Through our work, we aim to:

- **Promote** community-centred, evidence-based, culturally and theologically informed responses to domestic violence and related forms of violence in religious, migrant and ethnic minority contexts.
- **Improve** cultural and religious sensitivity and literacy in responses to domestic violence and related forms of violence in the world.
- **Strengthen** connections between policy makers, aid organisations, service providers, religious institutions and grassroots organisations as a way of facilitating more integrated and effective responses.
- **Act** as a bridge and offer a convening space and a knowledge-sharing platform to enable a community of practice guided by a shared ethos of humility and cultural awareness.

## Our Core Values

Our Core Values are informed by our Mission and the Project dIdI//ፌልድላ Model for research and intervention design. As an Institute, we are committed to:

- **Impact with substance driven by community priorities**

- **Decolonial reflexivity centred on positionality**
- **Cultural and Religious Sensitivity**
- **Diversity of worldviews and healthy disagreement**
- **Community-grounded research and intervention design**
- **Survivor-centred, trauma-informed research and practice**
- **Interdisciplinarity and multistakeholder integration**
- **Collaboration and cocreation based on mutual respect**
- **Robust ethics and integrity in research and programme delivery**

More specifically:

- **Impact with Substance Driven by Community Priorities:** Our main premise is that meaningful and impactful interventions emerge when they are designed from the ground up informed by empirical evidence and real-life experiences. When research in domestic violence remains embedded in euro-centric or universalist theories of what causes or maintains domestic violence and is distanced from the diverse lived realities of affected individuals and communities, its value for real individuals and communities becomes questionable. We therefore commit to identifying impact that matters to our collaborators and communities and to promoting community priorities.
- **Decolonial reflexivity Centred on Positionality:** We recognise that historical and on-going epistemic and structural inequalities have interfered with inclusive knowledge production and contextualised responses to domestic violence and are committed to embodying and promoting a decolonised ethos and approach in all our research and intervention activities and programmes. We actively aim to subvert colonial legacies in research and community engagement, and we critically reflect on the strengths and limitations of our positionality and power asymmetries between us and members of the communities we engage with.
- **Cultural and Religious Sensitivity:** We respect diverse cultural and religious worldviews, including secular, feminist and religious worldviews, without ascribing to cultural absolutisms or relativisms. We recognise that people's religio-cultural beliefs can hold existential value for them, and we aim to engage with these with due sensitivity without hesitating to challenge theologically uninformed positions that harm members of these communities.
- **Diversity of Worldviews and Healthy Disagreement:** We understand that gender identities, gender-based violence, religion or migration can be sensitive topics and that people can feel strongly about their opinions. We encourage 'an epistemology of disagreement' and aim to facilitate healthy

encounters and debates provided that these are motivated by a shared respect for human dignity and life, and the right of all individuals to freely choose their own opinions and actions.

- **Community-grounded Research and Intervention Design:** We believe that interventions on domestic violence and other forms of violence have often failed to generate sustainable outcomes or community acceptance due to lacking sufficient contextualisation and ethnographic insight to capture nuanced lived experiences. We employ an approach whereby all our interventions are based on and emerge from prior community-based research typically led by or co-created with community stakeholders and members.
- **Survivor-centred and Trauma-informed Research and Practice:** We always prioritise do-no-harm principles and only work in communities and conditions where we have acceptance and relevance. When we work with communities, which may include victims and survivors of domestic violence and other forms of violence, we take all appropriate and necessary action to ensure the informed consent, privacy, and dignity of the participants and to minimise the likelihood of re-traumatisation, stigmatisation or retaliation by perpetrators.
- **Interdisciplinarity and Multi-stakeholder Integration:** We recognise that domestic violence and interconnected forms of violence are complex problems that can only be analysed with sufficient nuance through an interdisciplinary framework. We are committed to promoting interdisciplinary analyses and responses to the problem through a better integration of the arts, humanities and the social sciences and by bringing together stakeholders across academia, practice and policy who may not typically engage with each other, including women's organisations, feminist platforms and faith-based stakeholders.
- **Collaboration and Co-creation based on Mutual Respect:** At IDVRM, we start from the recognition that complex global problems cannot be addressed without transboundary knowledge-sharing and collaboration and are keen to create partnerships based on mutual respect and trust with organisations that are deeply embedded in the community and share our decolonial commitments. We engage with communities and collaborators as equal partners, and we promote shared ownership in research and practice.
- **Robust Ethics and Integrity in Research and Programme delivery:** We are committed to upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity in all

aspects of our research and programme delivery. This includes ensuring rigorous ethical review, transparency, accountability, and respect for all participants and communities we work with. We adhere to international and national frameworks for research integrity, and aim to promote responsible, inclusive, and reflexive practice across all our activities

## **Representation and inclusion**

- Opinions expressed by our team members or authors do not necessarily represent the position of IDVRM, its Director or other team members. IDVRM is comprised of diverse individuals who are encouraged to share their experiences and opinions openly with recognition that other team members may have different experiences and positions.
- IDVRM does not claim to represent any one community, and we understand that belonging to a specific group does not entitle any one of us to speak for all.

## **Commitments for IDVRM staff, team members, consultants and volunteers**

All affiliated members agree to:

- Follow IDVRM's safeguarding, data protection, and ethics policies outlined in the current Code of Practice.
- Communicate openly and honestly with the Director, other team members or supervisors (if any are assigned), especially if they face conflicts of interest.
- Immediately report any ethical or safeguarding concerns or incidents to the Director, Dr Romina Istratii ([romina.istratii.work@gmail.com](mailto:romina.istratii.work@gmail.com))
- Maintain strict confidentiality in their communication with the Director and other team members in relation to IDVRM-related work.

## **Support and Development**

IDVRM commits to:

- Provide opportunities for publication and knowledge exchange, such as through its blog platform and annual events.
- Create opportunities for participating in consultancies that fall within our team members' remit of specialisation (as we grow as a platform, we will aim to streamline this process for transparency and democratic information sharing).

- Encourage networking and team building so that all team members can feel included and develop a sense of belonging as part of the Institute's family.
- Take all reasonable action to maintain a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for the entire IDVRM community.

### **IDVRM's position on political activity**

- IDVRM has an inclusive, community-oriented mission that seeks to bridge research, practice and policy without engaging in political activity or any partisan work.
- IDVRM seeks to be inclusive of all communities that align with the values of the Institute, and does not condone any preferential treatment due to religious, ethnic, political or other affiliations.
- IDVRM does not seek to engage in political commentary or analysis, but it does not shy away from reporting factual and triangulated information about state-condoned violence among religious, ethnic minority and migrant communities as this relates directly to our work as an Institute.
- IDVRM expects all its team members, paid or unpaid, to respect IDVRM's position on political activity and to separate their personal political interests from their work with IDVRM.

### **Representation of IDVRM**

Staff and affiliated members:

- **May list IDVRM as their affiliation (e.g. 'Advisor', 'Volunteer', etc.)** in professional spaces (e.g. LinkedIn)
- **Cannot speak or act, either publicly or privately on behalf of IDVRM** unless authorised to do so through written agreement with the Director
- Recognise that official IDVRM communications on social media are made only by the **Director or authorised members of staff and representatives**

### **Use of IDVRM in Social Media**

Staff and affiliated members:

- Must **not** make statements as if representing IDVRM or its Director
- Must not imply **endorsement by IDVRM** of personal opinions, campaigns, or political positions in social media posts, emails or other communications

- Consider how political or ideological opinions expressed online may affect their affiliation with IDVRM and include an **explicit** disclaimer that these opinions do not represent IDVRM or their affiliation with the Institute
- Must ensure public communication in their capacity as IDVRM member respects IDVRM's **ethos, values, and reputation**
- Must recognise that IDVRM reserves the right to **terminate** its relationship with any member if their repeatedly breach the current Code of Practice. If this comes to IDVRM's attention, they will be given a written warning and the opportunity to explain any such breaches.

## **Safeguarding**

### **Our Commitment**

IDVRM is committed to the highest standards of **safeguarding** in all areas of our work. We believe that:

- All people, but especially victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of violence, have the right to live free from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- The welfare and safety of children, adults at risk and survivors of violence is paramount and everyone's responsibility.
- Safeguarding is everybody's duty and this includes staff, associates, partners, and clients.
- Any research and international work must be based on a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking or other exploitative practices.

This commitment applies across all levels of operational activity including our organisational practices, services delivery, research and intervention programmes and collaborative projects.

### **Team Members' Responsibilities**

All IDVRM-affiliated members, including staff, associates, partners and clients, agree to:

- Follow IDVRM's Code of Practice, Safeguarding, Data Protection, and Research Ethics policies at all times and in all contexts of activity.
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in IDVRM's activities, including team members and third parties.

- Prioritise the voice, agency and wellbeing of victims and survivors of domestic violence and interconnected forms of violence and take all necessary measure to minimise re-traumatisation, stigmatisation or privacy breaches.
- Always act to prevent harm, abuse and exploitation in the organisational and community context, including sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment.
- Maintain strict confidentiality in communication with the Director and other team members, sharing personal and sensitive data only through authorised channels and in line with IDVRM's Data Protection Policy.
- Immediately report any concerns or incidents related to harm, abuse or exploitation, including modern slavery, trafficking, harmful practice or other unethical practices, to the Director, Dr Romina Istratii ([romina.istratii.work@gmail.com](mailto:romina.istratii.work@gmail.com)), or the IDVRM's Safeguarding Lead if this role has been assigned.
- Uphold the highest standards of ethics and integrity in all aspects of research and programme delivery, including undergoing ethical reviews according to IDVRM's Research Ethics Policy, maintaining transparency and accountability, and showing respect for all participants, partners and communities.
- Engage with communities and collaborators as equal and respected partners and uphold the highest standards of transparency with community leaders and local authorities, and higher level of ethical behaviour when engaging with collaborators or community stakeholders.

## **Standards and Legal Frameworks**

Safeguarding at IDVRM is aligned with:

- **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**
- **European Social Charter**
- **EU Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU)**
- **Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- **Care Act 2014**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (UK)**
- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**
- **Respect UK standards**
- **Women's Aid England Quality Standards**



- **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act**
- **Charity Commission Safeguarding Guidance**

## **Training and Support**

IDVRM recognises that it has a duty to provide appropriate training and relevant support to its members.

- IDVRM will provide safeguarding and this training as part of staff induction and onboarding, or at the start of a collaborative agreement or project. Such training will make clear how staff can communicate safely any safeguarding breaches.
- Ongoing training will be also provided to staff on handling disclosures safely, trauma-informed approaches and safeguarding awareness, specially as the policy is updated and situations change.
- IDVRM recognises the risk of vicarious or secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout, or re-traumatisation for team members and researchers exposed to traumatic experiences. IDVRM is committed to supporting the well-being of its staff by encouraging flexible working hours, regular breaks and by providing support where possible, such as through confidential 1-1 meetings to discuss any concerns and develop a plan to address them.

## **Volunteers – Terms of Engagement**

IDVRM's position on volunteers is as follows:

- IDVRM does not wish to encourage the 'free labour economy' in international development, but it must rely on volunteer support in its early stages of development.
- Engaging volunteers creates opportunities for researchers, activists, practitioners and other specialists from around the world to become involved with the work of the Institute, learn from our practices, and channel their own international experience into the Institute's practices.
- In line with our anti-exploitation stance, we limit all our volunteer roles to one year and, after one year, we aim to engage volunteers under some paid position where possible (for example by inviting them to participate in consultancy contracts, research grants or provide research assistance services).
- All volunteers are invited to submit a Volunteer Activity Plan a way of promoting co-creation, meaningfulness and autonomy on the job.

- Volunteers must condone the current Code of Practice and follow IDVRM's policies on safeguarding, due diligence, ethical review and data management.

## **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement**

**The Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion and Migration (IDVRM)** is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and compliance with the **UK Modern Slavery Act 2015**, including all applicable guidance and reforms as of 2025.

We take a **zero-tolerance approach** to all forms of modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking, and exploitative practices. This commitment applies across all areas of our work, including:

- Our own staffing and recruitment practices
- Our procurement of goods and services
- Our partnerships and funded collaborations, both in the UK and internationally

IDVRM ensures that:

- All employment is **freely chosen**, with no forced, bonded, or involuntary labour
- All staff and volunteers are recruited under **fair, transparent, and lawful conditions**
- Working conditions are **safe, inclusive, and non-exploitative**
- All partners receiving IDVRM funding or entering formal collaborations must provide a **Modern Slavery Policy or Statement** and demonstrate clear safeguards against exploitative practices
- We conduct due diligence to ensure **no organisation we work with** is complicit in any form of modern slavery

All staff are expected to report any concerns or incidents related to modern slavery, trafficking, or unethical practices to the Director or Safeguarding Lead.

## **Additional Standards for Research Staff and Associates**

IDVRM regularly welcomes new Research Staff and Research Associates (Honorary) to contribute to our international, interdisciplinary research programme.

Honorary Research Associates titles are granted to individuals in recognition of the relevant research they conduct to support them with an institutional affiliation.

These team members are expected to uphold UK and international standards of research integrity.

## **Research Integrity Standards**

Research Staff and Research Associates commit to:

### **a) Honesty**

- To **present** research goals, methods, data, and findings **truthfully**
- To **acknowledge limitations** and uncertainties
- To declare any and all **conflicts of interest** transparently

### **b) Rigour**

- To undergo IDVRM's **ethics review process** and ensure approval prior to starting any research on the ground
- To use **appropriate methodologies** carefully and rigorously
- To ensure **accurate, complete and secure data**
- To engage in **critical and reflexive analysis** of the findings

### **c) Transparency**

- To maintain clear and accessible **research records**
- To share **research protocols** appropriately
- To ensure **ethical and secure data use and sharing**

### **d) Respect for Participants**

- To ensure **fully informed consent**
- To prioritise the **privacy, dignity and safety** of participants
- To minimise any likelihood of **exploitation or re-traumatisation**
- To maintain **cultural humility and sensitivity**

### **e) Compliance**

Comply with:

- **UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity**
- **Singapore Statement on Research Integrity**
- **ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**

- **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act**
- **IDVRM Research Ethics and Safeguarding Policy** (to be made available as soon as internally approved)

#### **f) Accountability**

- To take personal responsibility for research work
- To report concerns or misconduct to the **Director** or the **Research Ethics Lead** if one has been assigned
- Participate in mandatory **ethics training** when such is made available by IDVRM

#### **g) Proper Attribution**

- To acknowledge all contributors fairly
- To follow authorship and citation ethics
- To credit collaborative contributions appropriately

#### **h) Openness to Learning**

- To be **open to feedback**, peer review and new insights
- To engage in ongoing learning on **ethical and methodological best practice**

### **Breach of Code**

Breaches will be addressed by the Director or designated staff.

Consequences may include:

- Review and possible termination of the role.
- Reporting to appropriate external bodies, if breach is considered of a serious nature (e.g. academic, regulatory, safeguarding authorities)