



Human Subject Research Policy

MEWA Health and Harm Reduction Unit

Approved February 2025

Revised January 2025

1.Responsibility for approval of policy	<i>MEWA CEO</i>
2.Responsibility for implementation	<i>Abdalla Badhrus</i>
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	<i>Abdalla Badhrus</i>

Human Subject Research Policy for MEWA

1. Introduction

Muslim Education and Welfare Association (MEWA) was founded in 1986 as a community-based organisation to elevate the education status of its community. In 1994, the organisation gained NGO status, and since then, it has been committed to improving the lives of the communities it serves through education and community development programs. The organisation occasionally engages in research involving human subjects to gather data and insights that inform its programs, policies, and strategies.

Given the sensitive nature of working with human subjects, MEWA is committed to conducting research in a manner that is ethical, responsible, and compliant with international research standards and relevant laws and regulations. This policy provides the framework for ethical research involving human participants.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Human Subject Research Policy is to:

- Establish clear guidelines and standards for conducting ethical research involving human subjects.
- Ensure that research activities conducted by or in collaboration with MEWA are aligned with national and international ethical guidelines, including the Declaration of Helsinki, the Belmont Report, and applicable laws.
- Safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of human subjects participating in research activities.
- Promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in research activities involving human subjects.
- Provide a clear process for obtaining informed consent from participants.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All research projects conducted by MEWA or in collaboration with external researchers or organizations.
- Research involving human participants in any capacity, including surveys, interviews, clinical trials, and observational studies.
- All employees, contractors, collaborators, and volunteers involved in the design, implementation, or management of research activities involving human subjects.

4. Ethical Guidelines for Human Subject Research

MEWA adheres to the following key ethical principles for human subject research:

- **Respect for persons:** All participants should be treated with dignity and respect. Informed consent must be obtained from all participants, ensuring they fully understand the nature, purpose, and potential research risks.
- **Beneficence:** The well-being of participants should be prioritized. Research should aim to maximize benefits and minimize risks for participants. Research designs intended to provide value to the community and address real-world problems.
- **Justice:** Research participants should be selected fairly, ensuring equitable participation and the fair distribution of benefits and burdens across different groups. Vulnerable populations should be protected from exploitation.
- **Non-maleficence:** The research should avoid harming participants. Any potential risks must be clearly outlined, minimized, and justified by the potential benefits of the research.

5. Informed Consent Process

Before any research involving human subjects can commence, MEWA will ensure that:

- **Informed consent:** All participants must give voluntary, informed consent before participating in any research activity. This means that participants must be fully informed about the nature, purpose, risks, and benefits of the research.
- **Clear information:** Information provided to participants will be written in clear, non-technical language and will include details on the study's purpose, procedures, duration, potential risks, confidentiality measures, and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- **Minors and vulnerable Populations:** In cases where research involves minors or other vulnerable populations, additional safeguards will be put in place, including obtaining consent from legal guardians or representatives.
- **Right to withdraw:** Participants must be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences or loss of benefits.

6. Institutional Review Board (IRB) / Ethical Review

All research involving human subjects conducted by or under the auspices of MEWA will undergo a review by an independent ethical review body (such as an Institutional Review Board or Ethical Review Committee). The IRB will ensure that:

- The research proposal meets the ethical standards outlined in this policy and other relevant regulations.
- The risks to participants are minimized and are outweighed by the potential benefits.
- The informed consent process is robust and fully complies with ethical standards.
- The research adheres to the principles of confidentiality, privacy, and data protection.

7. Confidentiality and Privacy

MEWA is committed to protecting the privacy of participants and maintaining the confidentiality of the data collected. The following measures will be taken:

- **Data protection:** Personal data and research findings will be stored securely, with access restricted to authorized personnel only.
- **Anonymity:** In cases where possible, research findings will be anonymized to protect the identities of participants. Participants' personal information will not be shared without their explicit consent.
- **Data retention:** Data will only be kept for as long as necessary for the purpose of the research, after which it will be securely destroyed or anonymized.

8. Risk Management and Safety

MEWA will take steps to ensure that all research involving human subjects is conducted with the utmost care for the safety and well-being of participants:

- **Risk assessment:** A risk assessment will be conducted before the research, identifying any potential risks and developing strategies to mitigate them.
- **Medical assistance:** If the research involves any potential health risks (such as clinical trials or medical studies), medical assistance will be available, and participants will be informed about how to access it if necessary.
- **Monitoring:** Ongoing monitoring will be conducted throughout the research process to ensure that ethical standards are maintained and that any emerging risks are addressed promptly.

9. Research Integrity and Accountability

MEWA is committed to conducting research with integrity. All research findings must be reported honestly and transparently, without manipulation or fabrication of data.

- **Reporting:** Research findings will be shared with stakeholders, including participants (where appropriate), the wider community, and the public.
- **Accountability:** Any breach of this policy or ethical standards will be investigated, and corrective actions will be taken. This may include disciplinary actions or suspension of research activities.

10. Conclusion

MEWA is dedicated to conducting ethical research that benefits the communities it serves. By adhering to this Human Subject Research Policy, the organisation ensures that all research activities respect the rights, dignity, and well-being of human participants, while also maintaining compliance with relevant laws and ethical standards. This commitment

to ethical research practices strengthens the impact of MEWA's programs and contributes to the broader mission of improving education and community development.

Approved by:

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Date]