

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

IMPACTX FOUNDATION

"Be the Reason Someone Smiles Today"



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1. Introduction

Protecting children, adolescents, and adults from any kind of violence, abuse, sexual exploitation are now universally recognized as fundamental for the realization of their human rights and key to achieve sustainable development outcomes. Today's children are the future of the country, it is fundamental to create an enabling environment to help them explore their full potential, as 'every child has the right to live free from violence, exploitation and abuse, as stated by UNICEF.

Violence against children takes many forms, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and may involve neglect or deprivation. Violence occurs in many settings, including the home, school, community and over the internet. Similarly, a wide range of perpetrators commit violence against children, such as family members, intimate partners, teachers, neighbors, strangers and other children, (UNICEF, 2015 <https://data.unicef.org/topic/childprotection/violence>). Violence and abuse against adolescents and adults are also one of the major barriers that obstruct the process of their empowerment as it affects both their physical as well as mental health.

It is imperative for any organization who works for the wellbeing of children, adolescents and adults to have a safeguarding policy to defend them against any forms of violence, sexual harassment and abuse and promote their welfare.

1.1 Global Context

Global data shows that a child dies every 5 minutes as a result of violence and abuse; globally, almost 200 million children have been victims of sexual abuse; disabled children are between three or four times more likely to be subjected to violence and neglect; and an estimated 246 million children are harassed and abused on the way to, or at, school, (UNICEF).

Every day, in every country, children are abused, beaten, raped and more. Too often, the abuser is someone the child knows and trusts. They may even work for an organization that's meant to help children, (Keeping Children Safe). In recent news of exploitation of beneficiaries/clients by INGOs raises much concern about this issue. However, this could happen in any places, be it a sports club, school, faith institution, aid organization or peacekeeping force.

1.2 Bangladesh Context

Lack of data does not allow to embody the real picture of child abuse in Bangladesh, however, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) – a national network of non-government organizations (NGOs) actively engaged in child rights work – last year published their findings on the overall status of child abuse in the country from January to June shows that from January 1 till June 30, at least 1,387 children in Bangladesh have been subjected to various forms of violence and abuse, read the press release, (Dhaka Tribune July 7, 2020).

The incidence of gender based violence among currently-married women is 80.2% (BBS VAW Survey 2015). The situation becomes worse during the Covid-19 pandemic. Under the current context, it is the right time to act to have safe guarding policy to protect children, adolescent and adults and promote their welfare.

2. IMPACTX FOUNDATION: Mission and Vision

Chayatal Bangladesh is a non-profit, voluntary organization established in 2016 and dedicated towards enlightening and improving the lives of economically and socially deprived members of the society. ImpactX Foundation aims to provide basic education to the underprivileged children in a view to bring them into mainstream society. It also aims to provide livelihood support to disadvantaged people and relief materials to victims of natural calamities and to raise awareness about early marriage, dowry, and gender based violence and other social evils.

Mission

Our mission is to safeguard, preserve, and uphold the fundamental rights of underprivileged children and socially disadvantaged segments of the population, aiming to eradicate all forms of poverty and discrimination from society. We aspire to establish a secure society where children are healthy and well-educated. This will be achieved by offering essential educational resources and nutritional aid to underprivileged children, as well as by generating employment opportunities and providing vocational training in areas such as technological training, sewing, mobile repairing, and computer skills.

Vision

To build A Bangladesh where every underprivileged child has equal access to education, healthcare, nutrition, and safe opportunities to grow into a capable and empowered individual.

ImpactX Foundation has a range of activities

- Basic Education for Underprivileged Children.
- Nutrition Support for underprivileged children.
- Health and Hygiene Program for the poor people.
- Mother and Child Nutrition Program.
- Child Rights and Protection, etc.
- Safe environment for both boys and girls

3. Purpose of the Safeguarding and Protection Policy: Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to protect ImpactX Foundation's all program participants, particularly children, their parents, ImpactX Foundation partners, members, teachers, general members, board members and volunteers, irrespective of their age, sex, religion, ethnicity, minority, disability and sexual orientation from any harm or any form of violence be it physical, sexual, and emotional caused by ImpactX Foundation personnel or operations or by any other outsiders.

Malfunction to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organization.

4. Definition:

Safeguarding: Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect and describes the broader preventative and precautionary approach to planning and procedures that are necessary to be in place to protect children, young people and adults (Safeguarding Policy, 2016).

Child: A person under the age of 18 years. Every child is to be treated equally, without discrimination, including, but not exclusive to, ethnicity, religious belief, cultural status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age.

Adult: A person aged 18 years and older irrespective of their ethnicity, minority, disability, sexual orientation and religion.

Vulnerable Adult:

a). Any person aged 18 years and older who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependence or reliance on others for services, basic needs or protection, and according to context, for example, in humanitarian situations.

b). An adult may also be at risk/vulnerable when in a relationship (social or work) with another who seeks to misuse their position of authority or trust to control, coerce, manipulate or dictate them.

c). An adult may also be at risk if their decision-making ability is impaired and/or they do not have the support to make a decision.

Child abuse: includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, and commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (UNICEF 2018).

Abuse: It includes followings:

- **Physical abuse** - assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

- **Domestic abuse** - psychological, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; 'honor' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage.
- **Sexual abuse** – rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, non-consenting adult.
- **Psychological abuse** – emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying.
- **Financial or material abuse** – theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern Slavery** - slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – harassment or slurs because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organizational abuse** – neglect and poor care within an institution or care setting.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support and the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Self-neglect** – behavior neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings.

Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- ❖ Bullying and cyber bullying

- ❖ Child sexual exploitation
- ❖ Child Criminal exploitation
- ❖ Child trafficking
- ❖ Domestic abuse
- ❖ Child marriage
- ❖ Online abuse
- ❖ Violence against women

Confidentiality: For the purposes of this policy, confidentiality means that information about each incident will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

5. Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance those seek to protect children and adults in Bangladesh. Following are the list of policies:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which was ratified by the government of Bangladesh in 1990.
- National Children Policy 2011.
- The Children Act 2013.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CRMW).
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Domestic Violence Act 2010.
- Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Ain 2000.

ImpactX Foundation

Besides these, ImpactX Foundation has its own child protection, human resource policy and Finance policy.

Principles: The implementation of this policy is guided by the organizational values and the following principles:

- **Empowerment:** Ensuring people are supported, aware about their own rights and confident in making their own decisions and giving informed consent. People have their own choice and control over decisions made.
- **Participation:** to enable all member and stakeholders to participate in the development activities and implementation from fear of abuse and violence.
- **Protection:** Protection means providing support and representation for those in greatest need. Organizations can put measures in place to help stop abuse from occurring and offer help and support to those at risk.
- **Prevention:** Prevention is the act of organization working to stop abuse before it happens. Raising awareness, training and making information easily accessible are all the means that they can demonstrate prevention measures and encourage individuals to ask for help. It is better to take action before harm occurs and it will maintain the zero-tolerance to any forms of abuse.
- **Universality:** To apply a safeguarding lens, to everything SOF (Service Order Form) does, across all levels of operations.
- **Impartiality:** to remain objective, never judge or discriminate against people and respect the beliefs and perspectives of others.
- **Partnership:** Forming partnerships with local communities can create solutions as they can assist in preventing and detecting abuse by allowing organizations the opportunity to work together, as well as with the local community.
- **Assurance:** to build organizational trust that all concerns are received in good faith, treated confidentially and acted.

- **Accountability:** Safeguarding is everyone's concern and accountability to make sure that everyone plays their part when it comes to safeguarding vulnerable people. Everyone is accountable for their actions as individuals, services and organizations.

6. Implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Roles and Responsibility

This policy applies to all people involved with ImpactX Foundation as mentioned earlier, namely, its board, executive committee, members, volunteers, teachers, its partners and its operations at the field. In order to institutionalize this policy, ImpactX Foundation will carry out the following roles and responsibilities.

- **Organizational culture and environment:** Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, as well as the values that guide member behavior, and it also has a set of rules and behaviors that are determined by who are the people involved. Hence, the organization will maintain an enabling environment that allows people to work free from any kind of abuse. Safe guarding all people involved with ImpactX Foundation and promoting their welfare will be part of the organizational culture. ImpactX Foundation will maintain zero tolerance to all forms of abuse and violence that will also be reflected in their HR policy. It will also maintain an open and transparent mechanism about its protection and prevention measures of any incidents that occur.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Every person involved with ImpactX Foundation will be responsible to ensure that they understand the importance of safe guarding policy and abide by this policy. The position description of all member should include the principles of the safe guarding policy. Appoint a Safeguarding Focal Point and S/he should have (or be given the opportunity to fully develop) the technical skills and competencies necessary to provide appropriate guidance to technical and program coordinator to ensure that the policy is successfully implemented at the both at the organizational level as well as at the operational level. Safeguarding Focal Point should hold the

partners and member responsible for integrating safe guarding measures into programming, developing indicators that measure reduction of all form of abuse.

Safeguarding Focal point should be accountable, through the Executive Director, for implementation of the Safeguarding Policy (USAID, 2012).

- **Policies and procedures:** Existing policies and procedures will need to be adapted to integrate safeguarding measures, including HR policy, recruitment and selection policy and procedures and code of conduct for member. New policies and procedures may need to be introduced such as a whistle-blowing policy to support member that raise concerns.

- **Mechanism in place and procedure:** A small committee will be formed who would be free from any kinds of biases and maintain confidentiality to listen to any grievances within ImpactX Foundation, in its partner organizations or at the operation levels, and action will be taken after due investigation within maximum of three days.

7. Organizational Requirements

Successful implementation of this policy will require changes to ImpactX Foundation directives and procedures, as well as changes to organizational culture and practices. Therefore, following are some additional organizational requirements for successful implementation of the policy (USAID 2012). ImpactX Foundation believes that Safeguarding and promoting welfare is everybody's business and will have the responsibility to follow the 5 R's¹ Recognize, Respond, Report, Record and Refer.

Recognition – All Member

The ability to recognize behavior that may indicate abuse is of fundamental importance no matter whether the abuse may occur on ImpactX Foundation premises or at the operational level, in the home or in any other setting. All the member should be aware and informed so that possible abuse can be

¹Performance Through People, Safeguarding Policy, February 2016

recognized, investigated and acted on seamlessly and effectively. All the member should be trained to understand signs of possible abuse and know how, where and to whom to report concerns.

Response - All Member

Proper response is vital². Any report of or concern about possible abuse should never be ignored. In order to determine the most appropriate response, it is important to understand whether this a disclosure from an individual alleging abuse to themselves or to another. Clear understanding of the detail is vital when reporting the concerns to the Safeguarding Focal Point. It is also important to listen well and demonstrate. Assure the person sharing the complaint the confidentiality, that the concerns she/he have raised must be recorded and passed on so that possible abuse can be dealt with and reassure that they have done the right thing in reporting their concerns and that you will do everything you possibly can to help. Do not make unrealistic promises.

Reporting – All Member

The Safeguarding Focal Point and the small committee members must be trained to ensure they carry out this role effectively. Any incident or complaints recognized must be reported to the designated person and to the committee. No matter what, no incidents should be hold back from reporting. Once the reporting is done about the abuse to the Safeguarding Focal Point, it is his/her responsibility to take further action.

Recording – Designated Safeguarding Focal Point

Designated person should record precisely what has been alleged, using the words of the complainant. Records should include accurate quotation. It should also, if felt appropriate, include factual observations about the observable physical and emotional state of the individual sharing their concerns with Safeguarding focal point.

Referral - Designated Safeguarding Focal Point

Safeguarding focal point should place this case to the committee formed for further investigation into complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse. An investigation may include questioning staff or others relevant. Investigation should be carried out by the committee without any bias, if needed Safeguarding Focal Point may include someone outside of the committee. The investigation must be completed within three days. After full investigation, if needed the case could be referred to relevant organization to ensure justice.

² ibid

Capacity building: A range of capacity building initiatives will be required to inform and educate senior management, member, associates and volunteers about their responsibilities and obligations to safeguard people of all concern. A basic training on safe guarding training for all member will need to be completed within three months of approval of the policy.

Human Resources Practices: ImpactX Foundation will introduce incentive mechanisms to recognize safeguarding champions in the office as well as in the operation level who demonstrate exemplary efforts to promote safe guarding all people.

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