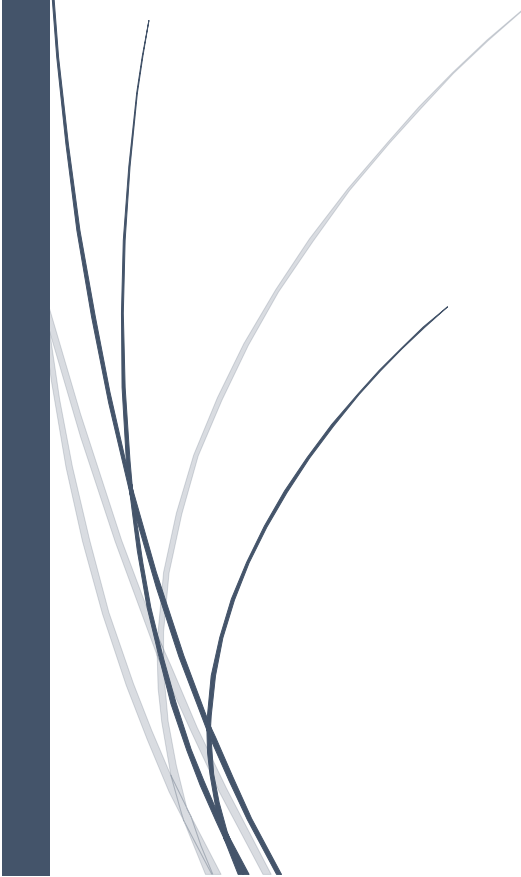




# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**



**Center for Participatory Research  
and Development (CPRD)**

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Mirpur, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh

This document has been approved by the 21st Executive Committee Meeting of Center for Participatory Research and Development-CPRD

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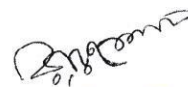
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## **PREAMBLE**

The **Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD)** is an independent, non-profit, and progressive policy, research, and implementation institute dedicated to promoting alternative development ideas and policies at local, national, regional, and global levels. Through interactive engagements in research, innovation, advocacy, solidarity, and action, CPRD works to influence policy and drive meaningful social change. The organization is actively involved in social development campaigns and capacity-building programs, identifying gaps, organizing training, and empowering stakeholders. Alongside its core mission of socio-economic development for disadvantaged communities, CPRD focuses on policy research, policy literacy, advocacy, campaigning, and mobilization.

Since its inception, CPRD has collaborated with research organizations and academic institutions both locally and internationally to support marginalized communities facing climate change vulnerabilities and disaster risks. The organization conducts community-based participatory action research and consistently produces policy briefs, study reports, and analyses on key national and global issues. These insights contribute to multilateral discussions and negotiations, helping shape policies that advance resilience, equity, and sustainability.

## *SECTION 1*

### ***STATEMENT OF POLICY***

This Safeguarding Policy is an integral part of CPRD's strategic plan to strengthen the protection of children and young people within or come in contact of the organization, ensuring their rights and well-being are upheld. CPRD is committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment for children and youth, recognizing their vulnerability to abuse by individuals in positions of power and trust. This policy aims to establish clear safeguarding practices that prioritize their safety and dignity at all levels of engagement.

The policy and its associated procedures apply to all individuals connected to CPRD, including children and youth, volunteers, team leaders, management committee members, trustees, board members, staff, and any individuals working within or on behalf of CPRD. It also extends to vendors, contractors, donors, celebrities, politicians, and visitors who interact with children at CPRD projects, or events. As a child and youth-friendly organization, CPRD upholds a **zero-tolerance** policy against child abuse, harassment, child labor, and neglect, reinforcing its commitment to a safe and protective environment for all young individuals.

## *SECTION 2*

### ***PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY***

To provide protection for the children and young people who receive CPRD's services.

That everyone associated with the organization is aware of their obligations and behaves appropriately towards children and youth.

To take all reasonable precautions to ensure staff and volunteers have passed screening procedures and do not pose a risk to children and youth.

To share and discuss with all current and future staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures that they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or youth may be experiencing or be at risk of harm.

To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of any allegations or suspicions regarding harm to children and/or youth arising from contact with CPRD staff, interns or volunteers, whether the harm has taken place on CPRD premises or not.

We are also committed to review our policy and good practice on every three years and lessons learnt will be incorporated into subsequent versions or at times of changes in law, policies of the country.

This policy is written in English and will be translated in Bangla where necessary.

### SECTION 3

#### DEFINITIONS

| Term                  | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Child                 | A child is anyone who is under the age of 18 years according to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Youth or young people | The National Youth Policy defines youth in Bangladesh as between 18-35 years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Staff                 | Who is being paid to work in any part of CPRD?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Visitor               | Visitors refer to a range of person who are visiting CPRD's programs and may come into contact with children through staff, media, researcher and celebrities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Child Abuse           | Abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child that can result in actual or potential harm to a child (by UNICEF).<br>Luring or forcing a child into any sexual activity, Any commercially exploitative activity with children such as trafficking and child labor, Using photographs for pornographic or other inappropriate use, Subjecting any child to torture or cruel, inhuman degrading treatment or punishment. |
| Managers              | Managers refer to plan staff who have responsibility for line managing or supervising the work of CPRD staff.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## *SECTION 4*

### ***LEGAL FRAMEWORK***

The policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and youth, namely:

The Children Act 2013 of Bangladesh;

Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child which has been ratified by Bangladesh;

Bangladesh Labor (Amendment) Act 2013;

Bangladesh National Youth Policy 2017;

## *SECTION 5*

### ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES***

The welfare of children and young people is the top priority in all situations.

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to protection from abuse or harm.

Children and young people should be encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. Some children are more vulnerable due to previous experiences, their dependency, communication needs, or other factors.

Working together with children, young people, their families, and other organizations is vital to promoting their welfare.

Parents are responsible for their children's welfare and should feel confident that their children are engaged with a trustworthy organization. This will be achieved by making the full safeguarding policy available for review.

CPRD acknowledges its responsibility to implement all necessary safeguarding measures to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people, both within its programs and in the communities it serves.

The review and enforcement of CPRD's safeguarding policy is a shared responsibility of all board members, staff, associates, and partners. They must be aware of this policy to identify and minimize potential risks.

## SECTION 6

### PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

The HR department, with the support of the relevant department's Senior Manager/Manager has safe recruitment practices. Managers are responsible for undertaking a detailed analysis of job tasks and assessing the level of contact with children (therefore the level of risk) as part of the initial assessment process.

The process for selecting volunteers will be different from those adopted for staff appointments but the same rigor will apply when the role involves contact with children.

### RECRUITMENT

- Always to recruit the most suitably qualified and experienced staff for any vacant position;
- Ensure that safeguarding policy is stated in all its advertisements for recruitment;
- To ensure safeguarding policy statement and specific responsibilities included in the job description;
- To offer equal opportunity to all including all ethnicity, race and religion and specially to promote gender equality;
- To ensure highest possible levels of efficiency, professionalism and achievement.

### SCREENING PROCEDURE AND SELECTION

- Any form of identification (Passport/NID/Birth certificate);
- All candidates undertake an initial telephone screening process;
- Compile a shortlist of candidates for written competency test;
- A face to face interview with the line manager and HR manager;
- Job history check and behavioral questions;
- Resolution of employment gaps;
- Two reference checks;
- Select the candidate.

## MONITORING

- Train all CPRD staff who have regular contact with children to ensure they understand the Child Protection Policy.
- Conduct safeguarding training twice a year for the staffs who have regular contact with children.
- Require all staff to sign a statement agreeing to follow the Safeguarding Policy.
- Include safeguarding training in the induction process for new staff and volunteers.
- The Safeguarding Policy will be available as a soft copy on request and a signed hard copy will be kept at CPRD's registered office.

## SECTION 7

### CODE OF CONDUCT

CPRD condemns any abusive or exploitative behavior and is committed to the safeguarding of its program participants, particularly the target beneficiaries, as they are the most vulnerable. The organization has a clearly articulated code of conduct that must be adhered to all staff, volunteers, board members, partners, sub-contractors, sponsors and visitors.

#### **A. Attitudes:**

All Staff are committed to:

- Treating children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always listening to a child or young person, rather than question him/her directly.
- Give the child and/or vulnerable young person time and attention.
- Communicate children and young people about safe and unsafe touch and behavior and situations and how to avoid them and how to report.
  - o Reassure the child and young people that:
    - They have done the right thing in telling you
    - They have not done anything wrong
- Tell them to use appropriate language with children and young adults.
- Recognize and encourage the unique contribution each child and young person can make.
- Ensure that any kind of program participants treat others with respect and don't allow participants to talk to another in an inappropriate way even if they say it's just a joke or they don't really mean it.
- Make sure all participants should be dressed appropriately and should not wear any clothes that would offend anyone; e.g. clothes that are too revealing or T-shirts with offensive slogans or images. If someone is seen dressed inappropriately, please speak to them.

Volunteers:



Volunteering with CPRD provides a valuable opportunity to contribute directly to various research and development activities focused on children and young people. However, the actions and activities of volunteers may pose potential risks to the safety and well-being of the children and young people engaged with CPRD.

Ensure that they never:

- o Enter any form of sexual relations with children.
- o Stay overnight in the same room with any child.
- o Use language, or act in physically or sexually provocative and inappropriate manner.
- o Shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children and young people or engage in emotional abuse.
- o Take images of children which are detrimental or explicit and undermine the child's dignity.

**B. One to one contact:**

Staff, interns and volunteers shall:

- Not meet any participant child or young people alone in a closed space.
- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with a particular child unless the child needs special care, in that case another staff person needs to be there. If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff is informed of the meeting and another staff must be present.
- Not hug or touch in a way that makes a child uncomfortable.
- Not smoke or consume alcohol in front of a child.

**C. For sponsors and visitors:**

Visits to projects and children are opportunities to see development work first hand. It is essential that all official visitors and sponsors are aware of and understand the principles of CPRD. All visits should be monitored and recorded by assigned officials and in no circumstances visitors to be left unattended in the presence of child/children.

**D. Abuse:**

*Physical abuse:*

Staff and volunteers should never:

Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

Impose any corporal punishment on any child. Corporal punishment includes hitting children with the hand (slapping, smacking, spanking, pushing) or with an implement (a

whip, belt, stick, shoe etc.). It can also involve, for example: kicking, shaking or throwing children, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, cigarette or other burns, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions or forced ingestion, child labor at home.

*Emotional abuse:*

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child and young people such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to children and young people that they are worthless, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve serious bullying and verbal abuse causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation of children.

Individuals within the organization need to be alert to the potential abuse of children and young persons within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of this organization.

*Sexual abuse:*

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images or watching sexual activities, or forcing a child to witness sex between adults or forcing children to engage in sexual activity among them.

**E. Child participation:**

- Staffs accompanying children are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children involving outside events. These staff receives pre-event briefing and guidance on child risk management issues to the particular event being organized. The staff to child participants ratios shall be: 1:10.
- For all social program activities and excursions staffs/group leaders must have a list of names of all participants.
- When using public transport with a group of participants the group leader should ensure participants stay together. Do a head count to ensure no one has been left behind.

**F. Media and Communications:**

- All images and stories featuring children will be obtained with their/parent's/guardian's informed consent. Photo or Video in no way should undermine the dignity of the children.
- CPRD respects confidentiality and has a responsibility to protect identifying details that may feature in its publications or in other material. Information should only be shared and handled on a *need to know basis*. Only individuals who have legitimate reasons to access the information are allowed to receive it.
- Any sort of official visit by media to CPRD programs/projects related to children, should include a member of staff to make sure no photographs or information is being taken without informed consent of CPRD officials.
- The issue of confidentiality is secondary to the need for the safeguarding of children. Information in relation to safeguarding concerns will be shared with the relevant authority when deemed necessary.
- Inform employees, volunteers and partners that they must not use any technology for the purpose of accessing, producing or distributing any information or violent or sexual images that are harmful to children and young people. This includes adult pornography.

**G. General:**

Staff, consultant, visitors and volunteer should:

Be aware that someone might misinterpret CPRD's actions in regards to the safeguarding policy no matter how well intentioned.

Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts.

**SECTION 8****WHISTLEBLOWING**

CPRD places a mandatory obligation on all staff, interns and volunteers to report their line manager or functional leader, HR department that any instances where they suspect a fellow member of staff to be engaging or to have engaged in any inappropriate or illegal activities must report to the an authorized "Children and Young People Protection Committee". Confidentiality and support will be given to any staff member who raises such concerns.

## SECTION 9

### **SAFETY MEASURES**

It is the responsibility of all staffs to ensure that child participants are in a safe and secure environment while they are in an event or program of CPRD. The following are guidelines for ensuring CPRD child participants enjoy a safe and secure environment at the sprogram premises:

- Ensure all infrastructures are safe. If any of the chairs or desks is in need of repair or replacement, put them out of use immediately and inform concerned manager immediately.
- Make sure that all electrical cables are covered or in not a position that would cause child participants to trip over them.
- Each CPRD event/program has a safe, drinkable water supply.
- Each program/event must ensure proper sanitation; separate washrooms for boys and girls, trainers and staffs.
- The program/event premises must be clean, safe and narcotic free zone. Child participants, Trainers are not permitted to bring cigarettes or alcohol onto the premises.
- All child participants should be made aware of the safest route to any off-premises rooms and reminded of road safety.
- Program/Project Coordinator must check that the materials they use in the classroom will not be harmful in any way to any child participants.
- While some websites that may pose a risk to child participants are blocked on the program/event server. All staff, volunteers and trainers in particular, must yearly remind child participants of the potential danger of sharing personal information on the internet, uploading photographs, online harassment and the potentials for scams.

## SECTION 10

### **REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES**

Managers have a responsibility to ensure a clear, detailed reporting mechanism by which concerns can be raised quickly and effectively.

#### Reporting

- o All CPRD Programs/events should have one complain box for children which will be checked on the first working day of each week.
- o Child Welfare Team member and Human Resources (HR)'s phone number must be available in program/event's notice board.
- o A person who wish to report any incident of abuse needs to disclose the self-identity as far as practicable (full name/date of birth/gender/home address/ designation etc.).

- o If children wish to report allegations, suspicions and incidents which indicates actual or potential abuse, they can talk to their trainer or EProject/Program Coordinator or make a phone call to HR department or Child Welfare Team or by putting the paper chit in the complaint box. It is very important to keep the identity of the child (incident reported by) confidential throughout the process.
- o If a staff wishes to report allegations, suspicions and incidents of abuse, they need to make a phone call to HR department or talk face to face with Line Manager or have a close door online meeting with the Child Welfare Team when s/he has a reasonable belief that a child has been harmed or is at potential risk of harm.
- o Parents should report to Project Officer, Coordinator, Child Welfare Team or HR department by making phone call with proper identity and information or a face to face meeting, if they have any reasonable concerns or incidents to report about their child safety.
- o If a child reports abuse, s/he must be supported. It takes a child great deal of courage to report abuse, especially if it is within the immediate or extended family or friend.

#### Investigating procedure

- o Once a statement has been collected from a student further questioning should be avoided apart from important clarification or factual detail.
- o The Child Welfare Team, Coordinator and Project Officer together with the CPRD Management Committee, should initiate an investigation process that should start with a discussion with the accused staff member.
- o The staff member should be suspended if there is any suspicion that the allegation may be true. S/he must not make any contact with the child.
- o Investigations should be completed within 4-6 weeks at the very most and the decision should be conveyed to the staff member immediately thereafter.
- o If the accusation against the staff member is proven to be true, then the law enforcement authorities need to be informed and the case should be handed over to them.

## SECTION 11

### RECORD KEEPING

All employees' personal records, information and confidential notes should be clearly documented and kept by HR department in separate files in a locked room or in secure electronic files.

In the event of an allegation that involves a criminal offence, only the Chairman, Head of Program, and Management Committee (ManCom) will have access (strictly 'need to know basis') these files.

## SECTION 12

### **IMPLEMENTING THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The Managers at all levels are responsible for ensuring that the employees, volunteers, consultants, visitors, sponsors and partner organizations are aware of the policy and work in accordance with it.

A process of formal briefings should be the main tool for disseminating the policy and along with discussions, presentations and development of local procedures.

1. Formal briefings should include explanation of the CPRD's commitment to safeguarding children and young people, standards of behavior expected and what to do if the individuals have concerns about the child/young people's welfare.
  - A. Emphasis should be placed on all employees to be aware of the content of the policy and the requirements it places upon them in protecting children and young people. Discussions should be encouraged at the local level to determine specific obstacles to overcome in the development of local procedure.
  - B. All volunteers should be made aware of and understand the policy. The volunteers who have a regular contact with children/young people should develop a more in depth approach to the requirements of the policy when considering procedures.
  - C. Where concerns arise within partner organizations or individual sponsor/visitor the measures described in the policy for dealing with such cases will be applied.
2. The level of contact with children will determine the level of policy implementation.
  - A. Definitions of child abuse, information contained in the policy and the impact and the implications for the work of the CPRD are basic minimum exchange between managers, employees and others on the implementation discussions with a focus on.
  - B. The general situation of children and the impact of abuse, Staffing and management, Risk, Legal and social obligations to report child abuse, Local child and young people protection/support structures should be considered as an information resource. These details will help to develop the local procedures further and discussions should then focus on the most effective way of ensuring concerns are raised where appropriate.
  - C. A network of hospitals/clinics, doctors, health/psychologists/social workers and lawyers should be developed on child and young people safeguarding in the local context. Community leaders are useful in dealings with community specific issues.

3. It's necessary to take into account factors such as ethnicity, religion, culture, local law and traditional practices etc.

## *SECTION 13*

### ***IMPLICATIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE***

The Board of CPRD is ultimately accountable for this policy.

Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with these responsibilities may incur the following sanctions:

6.1 For CPRD staff: Employment contracts and disciplinary procedures contain provisions for dealing with anyone who breaches the safeguarding code of conduct.

6.2 For partner organization staff: Any partner organization staff who are proved to have abused a child must be removed from the organization. If the partner fails to take action, CPRD will terminate its agreement with the partner in keeping with the principle of zero tolerance towards child abuse, harassment, neglect and child labour.

6.3 For donor, sponsor, volunteer, interns, consultants and visitors: Any donor, sponsor, volunteer, intern or visitor found or suspected of being involved in any form of abuse will be, if they are not a Bangladeshi national, reported to the embassy of their own.

Bangladeshi nationals will be reported to the relevant, competent authorities and CPRD will expel the individuals.

Be aware that if a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate penalties will be applied in cases of false malicious accusations of child abuse.

## *SECTION 14*

### ***IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ENSURE SAFETY***

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children. If the child is in imminent danger and if there is an allegation of sexual or physical abuse; the child should be taken for immediate medical examination to the Emergency Department of the nearest hospital and the police should be contacted.

## SECTION 15

**RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The purpose of risk assessment is to enable the responsible person to identify, mitigate and remove any potential risks relating to whole organization and contact with children and young people.

Determine risk:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lawful Functioning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rental contracts</li> <li>• Regulatory agency registrations</li> <li>• Policies and procedures</li> <li>• Employee handbook</li> <li>• Document safety (MoU/Agreement)</li> <li>• Board membership</li> <li>• Board meeting minutes</li> <li>• Committee meeting minutes</li> </ul>                                                                                 | <b>Financial Risk:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed or duplicated vendor payments</li> <li>• Payments made to an incorrect vendor</li> <li>• Integrity of financial information to the Board</li> <li>• Physical security for accessing accounting records or personal files</li> <li>• Proper documentation</li> <li>• Thorough audit process</li> </ul> |
| <b>Child and Young People Protection Controls:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsors/visitors interacting with children</li> <li>• One-on-one meetings between employees/volunteers and children</li> <li>• Limited measures to prevent unwanted attention or inappropriate behavior</li> <li>• Educating children and supporting young people on cyber safety</li> <li>• Unsupervised contact with children</li> </ul> | <b>Physical Assets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled access to computers for protecting confidential data</li> <li>• Ensuring all furniture and fixtures are safe</li> <li>• Security system for premises entry</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Human Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting background checks</li> <li>• Recruitment practices and screening</li> <li>• Workshops and training sessions</li> <li>• Defining management and staff responsibilities</li> <li>• Confidentiality and record-keeping procedures</li> <li>• Employment contract provisions</li> </ul>                                                                         | <b>Social Media:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photographing children/young people</li> <li>• Using images of children and young people for fundraising activities</li> <li>• Inaccurate press releases</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                            |