

Child Protection Policy

(Effective from 1st January 2014)

RISDA-Bangladesh

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1. Introduction

1.1 Organization Background

RISDA-Bangladesh (Resource Integration and Social Development Association in Bangladesh) is a non-government voluntary development organization. The Organization came into existence in 1993. Since then as an outcome of the dedication, sincerity and tireless efforts of all irrespective of staff, volunteers, community people and development partners involved with RISDA-Bangladesh, the organization has grown into one of the reputed non-government development organization in Bangladesh and engaged significantly in transforming the lives of underprivileged, marginalized and hard to reach people in the country.

1.1.1. Vision of the organization

RISDA-Bangladesh envisions a society where deprived and discriminated people are living with sustainable development in their life and livelihood and with respect and dignity.

1.1.2. Mission of the Organization

Mission of RISDA-Bangladesh is to work with deprived and discriminated people, stakeholders in the society and state party for collective action to establish rights and entitlement for their life and livelihood.

1.1.3. Values of the Organization

RISDA-Bangladesh is committed to values of mutual respect, equity, justice, rule of law, transparency, accountability, integrity and impartiality.

1.1.4. Objective of the Organization

- To reduce illiteracy through both formal, non-formal and higher education;
- To create ecological balance through renewable energy like, biogas ,solar and other initiative, intensive social forestation, biodiversity and other initiatives;
- To promote healthy families, planned population and prevention of HIV/AIDS through health, nutrition, family planning, education and awareness on HIV/STD/AIDS and ensure quality of life;
- To generate income /employment opportunities for the unemployed youth, destitute women, marginal farmers and landless people and make them self-reliant;
- To create economic sustainability and social empowerment of rural and urban disadvantaged poor through micro finance and savings;

- ❑ To encourage IGA initiative of the rural poor in fishery, poultry rearing, homestead gardening etc. and provide technical and financial support as well as other assistances;
- ❑ To provide shelter, relief and rehabilitation of the orphans, disabled, distressed and disaster affected people;
- ❑ To enhance women empowerment and eliminate gender inequalities and social injustices through different measures and to ensure legal assistance and human rights;
- ❑ To conduct research, survey, study, advocacy and consultation programs to support and pursue development initiatives and promote good governance at local and national levels;
- ❑ To create organizational sustainability through business or enterprise development centers, information and technology centers, centers for basic and higher education, technical and vocational training institutes, centers for resources development etc.;
- ❑ Implement others relevant projects as on the goal and objectives of RISDA-Bangladesh.

1.2. Child Protection Policy and its Purpose

The policy document presents the standard procedure and policies of child protection of RISDA-Bangladesh. This is a guiding rule for all projects/programs, staff members of RISDA-Bangladesh, which serves the interest of all its stakeholders. Each section of this policy defines the policies and procedures of child protection issue; however, not all events can be incorporated. As such, under special cases management shall try to remain true to the intent of welfare of the stakeholders of RISDA- Bangladesh.

The primary goal of the policy is to protect the well being of children that protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The specific purpose of the policy is:

- ❑ To ensure a child friendly environment where children directly and indirectly involved with RISDA-Bangladesh are protected from any form of abuse and exploitation.
- ❑ To sensitize all level staff, board members, volunteers, interns, consultant, visitors and other individuals/organization involved with RISDA-Bangladesh to the child protection issue.
- ❑ To reflect child protection policy to all the policies, strategies, planning of the organization as well as implemented and monitored.
- ❑ To empower children to be aware and challenge any kind of abuse against them.

1.3. Basic Concepts and Components of Child Protection Policy

RISDA-Bangladesh is committed to protect children from any kind of abuse, neglect and

exploitation and promotes their rights in agreement with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Globally, there is a legitimate concern among the government, donors and the stakeholders about protection of child rights in all levels. Therefore, every organization requires a child protection policy to improve the situation of children. It will assist the managers in making administrative planning, communicating, controlling and deciding over program and organizational management.

1.4 Salient features of the Child Protection Policy

1.4.1 Approval & Commencement

This policy will be effective through an office order after approval from Executive Committee of RISDA-Bangladesh. Once the policy is approved and issued order for implementation, all existing policies, practices and conditions which are irrelevant to new ones will be void. Besides, RISDA-Bangladesh management will develop, amend and review policy and procedure from time to time through memo and circular. If such development, amendment and review, relevant to local law and policies, will replace existing policies and procedure.

If there is any controversy in the policy due to lack of/ for explanation or there is no existence of such rules/ policies/ guidelines, the explanation and decision of Executive Director will be final and it will be included in the manual.

This policy is effective from the 1st January of 2014 and shall apply to all steps for child protection undertaken by RISDA-Bangladesh.

1.4.2 Process of updating

The child protection policy of RISDA-Bangladesh is not a static document; it is expected to review and update time to time to be a living and evolving document. It is to be assumed that the promotion of gender equality in an organization reflects its organizational requirements. Therefore, with the change of requirements, it is imperative that this Policy is also updated/ modified with approval of the Executive Committee. The Chief of Child Protection Committee (CPC) shall notify changes to the manual. All pages are dated to ensure accuracy. The manual will have loose-leaf binding as the interim amendment (page) can be included easily.

In each three year, RISDA-Bangladesh management will form a review committee or recruit an external consultant to review the whole documents and the committee/consultant will submit the proposed amendments to the authority of RISDA- Bangladesh. The employees

of RISDA-Bangladesh can recommend any amendment/ inclusion/ exclusion to the committee/consultant. If possible, one female staff will be included in the committee. All types of amendment/ inclusion/exclusion will be done subject to prior approval of Executive Director.

1.4.3. Accountability

On principle, the Executive Director can only authorize the direction of RISDA-Bangladesh, but, in practice, to a certain extent, this authority is delegated to the operational management Chief Operation Officer/ Area Manager/ Credit Coordinator/ Project Coordinator/ Project Manager/ Accounts Manager so that the projects of RISDA-Bangladesh can be managed on a day-to-day basis without the direct involvement of the Executive Director.

2. Guiding Principles

This policy is informed by a set of principles that derive from the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. Principles upon which the Child Protection Policy is based –

- a) Non-discrimination: All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity or socio economic status. They should be encouraged to fulfill their potential and equalities should be challenged;
- b) Best Interest: Child's best interest should be prioritized in all activities of RISDA-Bangladesh;
- c) Participation: In all activities of RISDA-Bangladesh, children should have opportunity to participate when relevant and participation in decision making;
- d) Survival and development: Children's survival and development issues should be prioritized in all activities of RISDA-Bangladesh.

3. Code of Conduct

In order to ensure full protection of children in all activities, strategies and planning of all activities of RISDA-Bangladesh, following code of conducts are taken as obligatory for all persons and organizations involved with RISDA-Bangladesh directly or indirectly.

3.1. The Persons involved with RISDA-Bangladesh activities must do:

- a) All people involved with RISDA-Bangladesh must have awareness on child rights.
- b) To make children aware about their rights and responsibilities.
- c) To let know a child and its parents/ guardians about RISDA-Bangladesh process of

response to child abuse.

- d) To make a child capable in identifying difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- e) To make a child capable of protesting others unacceptable behavior with gentle manner.
- f) If a child's behavior is unacceptable, motivate him to change his mode of behavior.
- g) Create enabling environment where children can freely express their opinion.
- h) To help children in taking decision and respect their opinion.
- i) To ensure child friendly environment in RISDA-Bangladesh head office and select risk free place for holding activities with children.
- j) Children should be provided healthful and hazardous free education or communication material.
- k) To create enabling environment where children will feel free to express their concern and participate in discussion.
- l) To ensure reflection of CPP in principle. Strategy, procedure and process of activities of RISDA-Bangladesh.
- m) To behave with children on the basis of equality, dignity and respect irrespective of their religion, caste, ethnic identity, socio economic status etc.
- n) Respect a child's rights to personal privacy.
- o) Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private and underserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- p) Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- q) Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays. Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff.
- r) Recognize that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- s) Challenge unacceptable behavior and report all allegations/suspicious of abuse.
- t) Create enabling environment if there is chances to hide incident of abuse by a child due to awareness.
- u) Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback to a child rather than negative criticism.
- v) To give priority to the need and capacity of children and not pushing them against their will.
- w) Gain written parental consent for using photograph and information of child for study, research or business purpose.

3.2. The Persons involved with RISDA-Bangladesh activities must not do:

- a) Any discrimination to a child on the basis of its parent's profession, socio-economic

status, religion, ethnic identity etc.

- b) Express annoyance for unwanted conduct of a child or force him to refrain from doing such a rebuke.
- c) Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- d) Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children against their will.
- e) To call a child with humiliating name.
- f) Making a child to do personal work.
- g) To use abusive word in the presence of a child.
- h) Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- i) Watch nude photographs, porn video or other materials with children.
- j) Let a child contact with hazardous equipments.
- k) Convince a child through lying to avoid his concentration from a specific issue.
- l) Physical or mental torture or any act that causes physical and mental torture.
- m) Any act that provoke sexual feeling or sexual relation with a child.
- n) Show favoritism to any individual.
- o) Ensure that at any events adults should not enter the children's room or invite children to their rooms.
- p) Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- q) Push children to attend in discussion, cultural program or competition against their will.
- r) Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- s) Smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- t) Involve child labor in the activities of RISDA-Bangladesh.

4. Promotion of Child Protection

4.1. Training on Child Protection

Child Protection Committee (CPC) will assess the training need of all members of General Committee, Executive Committee and Staff Members and arrange orientation/training course on child protection among all level of organizational people of the organization.

4.2. Signing Code of Conduct:

All level of Staff of RISDA-Bangladesh, Board members, consultants, volunteers, interns, service providers must sign the code of conduct of Child Protection Policy as soon as agreement done with them.

4.3. Observation of National and International Days

Different national and international relevant days will be observed at the Upazila level especially International Children Day, International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Child Rights week, International Day Against Child Labor.

5. Response to Child Protection

5.1. Information flow

The Chief of Child Protection Committee (CPC) will designate a person collect all sorts of information collectively from bottom to upper level related any incidence of abuse and break of code of conduct. It will be considered breach of the Child Protection Policy and necessary action will be taken for protection and prevention.

5.2. Investigation

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) will form an investigation committee to investigate the incidence. If possible, there is a female member in the committee. For serious issues, investigation will be carried out within six hours and for less serious issues, it will be done within three days of the incidence. The team will submit a report with proper evidence not more than three days after the investigation.

5.3. Action following Investigation:

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) will review the report and recommend taking necessary action for protection and prevention of abuse, neglect and exploitation against children. For any disciplinary measure, prior approval of Executive Director will be must.

6. Implementation of Policy

6.1. The Child Protection Committee (CPC)

After commencement of the Child Protection Policy, a Child Protection Committee (CPC) will be formed with 5 (five) members where at least 2 (two) members will be female. The committee will implement and monitor the policy. The chief of the committee will be the focal person of the organization in this regard.

6.2. Budget Allocation:

As per recommendation of Child Protection Committee (CPC), the management of RISDA-Bangladesh will make necessary budgetary provision for undertaking promotion of protection activities of Child Protection Policy.

6.3. Monitoring & Evaluation

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) will review the progress of child protection at organization level at quarterly meeting and it will be documented in black and white. The management will publish a circular with the decisions of the meeting to all level of the offices.

Regular monitoring will be arranged with the help of proper specific guidelines and indicators to assess the present gender situation, which is friendly or not. In that assessment a format will be developed involving some common issues and indicators, after having the information. After recommendation of the committee, the management will take proper initiative and necessary action as per rule. An evaluation will be arranged in each three year by a Child Protection Specialist and the recommendation will be included in the next review.

6.4. Confidentiality

All documents and information of child abuse will be held in absolute confidence. No person or organization shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event except as necessary to ensure proper and neutral investigation. Limited additional disclosure can be made as example to protect other children from harm in the near future. Any breach of the confidentiality shall be cause for utmost punishment as per the policy of RISDA-Bangladesh.