



Uttaran

Child Protection Policy

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

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01	Date: July 2013		
	Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Dr Nazrul Islam Chairman
	Recommended by	Haridas Malakar, Coordinator (Accounts and Finance)	
02	Date: July 2017		
	Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Dr Nazrul Islam Chairman
	Recommended by	Haridas Malakar, Coordinator (Accounts and Finance)	
03	Date: 31 March 2021		
	Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
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BACKGROUND

Uttaran, which means 'transition', in Bangla language, is a people centred organisation using a rights based approach to alleviate poverty, diversify livelihood opportunities and empower poor communities throughout the southwest region and gradually expanding to other parts of Bangladesh. The core focus of Uttaran programs are human rights, land rights and agrarian reform, community based river basin management, sustainable water management, adaptation to climate change, ecological agriculture and food security. Uttaran started its development intervention to uphold the rights of the poor and underprivileged in 1985 from Jatpur village of Tala upazila under Satkhira district. The organization is now directly implementing multiple programmes to improve socio-economic condition of poor and extreme poor at Satkhira, Khulna, Jessore, Bagerhat, Pabna and Rajshahi districts of Bangladesh. The organization works with landless especially women, outcastes, untouchables and religion-ethnic minorities and extreme poor communities of the region. Currently the organization is covering 75,000 direct partner-beneficiaries. At Uttaran we believe, that long-term sustainable change, can only be achieved by first giving voice to the most vulnerable in society and listening to their concerns. We work in partnership with communities across southwest Bangladesh to develop participatory programmes that respond to their needs. Below is a summary of our programs and activities.

For the betterment of the children, the organization is operating a range of child focused programs i.e. provide formal and non-formal education among children, encourage the development of different forms of secondary education including general and vocational education, provide school feeding support, arrange child friendly spaces during the time of disaster, especial emphasis are given during the time of emergency support, children focus families are given priority for providing any support.


INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY:

This policy has been developed honoring the Article 19 which provides that States Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19)

Uttaran has a common commitment to the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children. The abuse and exploitation of children happens in all countries and societies across the world.

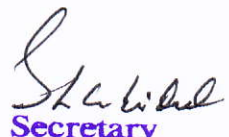
This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protect children.

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1. UTTARAN's COMMITMENT TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Values, Principles and Beliefs

- At the light of this convention, Uttaran is committed to promote the rights of all children without distinction or discrimination on account of age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.
- It whole heartedly believes that the situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- It is our principle that the child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality and Uttaran is committed to promote that;
- Uttaran believes that all children shall enjoy the benefits of social security and for ensuring this, the organization will contribute for that;
- Uttaran believes that all child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- The organization strongly believes that all children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable to Uttaran. Rather it believes that the child have the protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

Definitions–

- i) "Child" - UTTARAN regards a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives or in their home country. It is widely recognised that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, social and economic status, developmental stage, and dependence on others.
- ii) "Child Abuse" - Abuse - a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts.

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Discriminatory abuse – abuse motivated by a vulnerable person’s age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.

Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person’s basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse – includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Psychological abuse - includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include not giving a vulnerable person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person’s developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.


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- iii) Representative of Uttaran – The Safeguarding Committee of Uttaran will act as the representative. A child protection focal from the committee will particularly responsible for overall supervision.

2. EFFORTS OF UTTARAN

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse and discrimination through the following means:

Awareness Development:

It is our observation that a range of people of our societies are not aware about the rights of the children. Considering this through different awareness sessions/events we will ensure that:

- All staffs of Uttaran are aware about the rights and entitlements of the children;
- All the targeted beneficiaries are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children and
- All other stakeholders of the organization are honoring the rights of the children.

Prevention:

Uttaran will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimize the risks to children. It will ensure the responses of all other actors of the society to the risks to children. In this regard the responsible authority should conduct Risk and Safeguarding assessment before every project's inception and continue the process quarterly. In the case of involvement of children in activities an event safeguarding checklist must be conducted. The safeguarding focal along with child protection focal will ensure all the policies and assessment are place.

Reporting:

Uttaran is committed to ensure that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children. If need, they will positively respond to the needs of the children. The project authority should inform safeguarding focal and child protection focal if any incident occurs and they will act accordingly to Uttaran's relevant policies.

Responding:

Uttaran will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse. In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, all branch offices of Uttaran will also ensure that they:

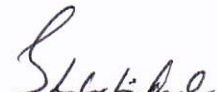
- Take seriously any concerns raised accordint to Uttaran's CRM procedures;

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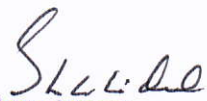
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns as per the guideline provided in Safeguarding policy;
- Support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
- Are guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- Listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

3. MEASURES TO ENSURE OUR COMMITMENTS ABOVE ARE MET

- Uttaran will take appropriate measures to diminish infant and child mortality;
- Uttaran will take measures to ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care;
- It will contribute within its programs to combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;
- The organization will be dedicated to ensure appropriate pre-natal health care for mothers;
- Uttaran will contribute to ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breast-feeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents;
- Along side the Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Uttaran recognizes the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, the organization will:
 - ✚ Contribute to make access of the children organized by it to universal primary education available free to all;
 - ✚ Contribute to encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

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- ✚ Play effective role to make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
 - ✚ Have a glorious role to make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children and
 - ✚ Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.
- Uttaran will play important role in ensuring birth registration of new born children of the geographically backward places;
 - It will advocate to reduce and combat child marriage, torture and violence against women and child trafficking and
 - Child rights and welfare issues will be included as cross-cutting issues in all other programmes and projects operated by Uttaran.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE STAFF OF Uttaran:

All Uttaran staff must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct. This Code is binding on all representatives of Uttaran at all times, including non-working hours.

Staff and others must never:

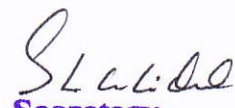
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children who could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

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- This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior, which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.


It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Inform safeguarding committee and child protection focal if there is any risk associated
- Conduct necessary safeguarding and risk assessment and take mitigative measure
- Conduct safeguarding event planning checklist when there is any child involved in project's activities
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

A Code of Conduct should refer to the Bangladeshi culture and context.

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