



Uttaran

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

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| <p>Date: March 2023 Approved by on behalf of executive board</p> | <p>Shahidul Islam Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Director Chairman</p> |
| <p>Update - 1 Date: January, 2026 Approved by on behalf of executive board</p> | <p>Shahidul Islam Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Director Chairman</p> |
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Introduction

Uttaran has been working to uphold the rights of extreme poor communities of Bangladesh since 1985. The organization formed with the aim to build a society free from all sorts of inequalities and where everyone has provided with their basic rights. Our rights-based approach includes assisting the disadvantaged and neglected communities their struggle for human rights and justice, ensuring citizens' rights and effective participation in various spheres of development. Uttaran concentrated on working for the social advancement of the rural poor focused on the landless especially women, outcastes and untouchables who are victims of socio-economic classification, hierarchic caste system and a male-dominated society.

Uttaran promote an empowering process through the establishment of poor people's driven institutions and vertical networking to ensure the realization of potentials, develop alternative leadership, collective social action, self-help development initiatives, and create access to decision making.

Uttaran is committed to provide a safe environment free from discrimination and harassment where employees, partner organizations, participants and other stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity and have equal opportunities at all level. At Uttaran we believe that all people regardless of their age, sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, color, physical and mental ability has the right to live life free from sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment. The concept of safety is generally used for much wider reference, however in this policy safeguarding will be conceptualized as protection against violence, abuse sexual harassment, child and adolescent abuse, bullying, intimidation, humiliation, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.

Uttaran understands that people in power and in better position are more likely to compromise the safety of vulnerable people particularly, women, vulnerable adults and children due to inequalities and vulnerabilities. Thus Uttaran since inception has safeguarded its employees, volunteers, participants and partners prioritizing the concept of safety at all stages of the its programmes. Uttaran always try to practice and ensure a work environment where sexual harassment, child and adolescent abuse, intimidation, violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation are prevented and not tolerated at any cost. Where the design and its implementation cannot reduce risks sufficiently, UTTARAN has established other safeguarding mechanisms, like the selection and training of personnel, supervising and monitoring activities, reporting channels, investigation and punishment.

In many cases, UTTARAN has sought to furthermore carry its safeguarding forward into the communities it serves. It has done so by example, through dialogue and by tailored programmes.

This 36 years effort in safeguarding has been sustained because the fight against sexual harassment, child and adolescent abuse, intimidation, violence, bullying and discrimination, neglect and exploitation is part of UTTARAN's vision which is to eliminate caste, class and gender based inequality. Uttaran understands that by safeguarding the its people and

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community it serves, the right based approach and the core values of dignity, integrity and inclusiveness will be upheld.

UTTARAN has articulated that commitment to safeguarding at the level of its vision, mission, values, its code of conduct and its workplace instructions. It is a vital element in the induction of newly recruited employees and volunteers. It is an important element of its human resource strategy.

UTTARAN has noted with great concern the recent integrity scandals in the humanitarian and development sector and the moral panic that has ensued. UTTARAN mourns the suffering of victims and survivors, abhors the sexual harassment and the violence. UTTARAN applauds the renewed vigor with which organizations within the sector have undertaken to safeguard the people they work with and serve. UTTARAN understands that governments and donors are seeking more assurances from organizations within the sector - including from UTTARAN itself.

In the light of this crisis in the humanitarian and development sector, UTTARAN has undertaken to write up its of safeguarding practice in the form of a comprehensive safeguarding policy which has evolved from its existing policies such as- Child Protection policy, Gender Policy and Anti sexual harassment policy. In this policy, UTTARAN will bring together a handful of pledges that will guide its future efforts, safeguarding principles, standards of behaviour, safeguarding practices, governance; the relevant sub-policies concerning the safeguarding of specific groups in specific programmes and enterprises, and descriptions of all safeguarding practices it has developed in the last forty years, encompassing both design solutions and secondary mechanisms. UTTARAN acknowledges that it has in the past not done enough to document the way it safeguards; it will rectify that in this policy, in its underlying documentation and in future studies and publications.

Definitions

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.

Bullying - Bullying is when an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from others, and will probably continue if no action is taken. Bullying can occur in a variety of environments.

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.

Child protection is a central part of but not separate to safeguarding. It is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or programme of work. It also includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse.

In the past decades, there has been increasing recognition of the way in which children, young people and vulnerable adults can be at risk of discrimination, neglect, abuse and exploitation by those who are in positions of trust and power over them, including through development activities.

As a consequence, there has been a significant increase in the efforts made by development organisations to ensure that no harm results from the contact their employees, volunteers and other representatives have with their target populations or communities.

Through the development work, UTTARAN employees, employees of partner organisations and volunteers may engage with young people and vulnerable adults either directly or indirectly.

UTTARAN recognises it has an obligation to put in place all reasonable safeguarding measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including those with whom we work and those in the communities where UTTARAN work is undertaken.

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.

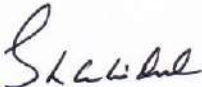
Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological 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,

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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.

Safeguarding is the responsibility that an organisation has to ensure that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations and programmes do no harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults¹ (together referred to as 'vulnerable people' under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the organisation has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that the organization has for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.

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.

Vulnerable person/people – for the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term which covers children, young people and vulnerable adults including PWD, elderly, pregnant and lactating mothers, Mentally unstable, drug influenced.

Purpose


The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide clarity to ALL (staff on how they should engage with children, young people and vulnerable adults when working for, on behalf of, or in partnership with UTTARAN. It is also to help us make sure that employees, volunteers and other representatives are protected.

It is intended to help us to have a common understanding of safeguarding issues, develop good practice across the diverse and complex areas in which we operate and thereby increase accountability in this crucial aspect of our work.

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, which may result in immediate termination of employment or contract, withdrawal of volunteer status, and reporting to the police, relevant regulatory authority or other body.

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Scope:

This policy is mandatory for all Uttaran staff volunteer. For the purpose of the policy Staff are: anyone who works for UTTARAN. This to include directly or indirectly employed staff, trustees, contractors, consultants, volunteers and interns. It also to cover downstream implementing partners whom UTTARAN provides fund and they are expected to work under the policy. It also covers participants, client, vendor, supplier and other relevant stakeholders. The safeguarding policies also applies to all cases within Uttaran where Staff of Uttaran abuses other staff, where staff abuses participants, where participants abuses staff or participants abuse participants within the operational influence area of Uttaran.

Uttaran is committed to ensure safeguarding of all its staff and participants against any abuse. Uttaran recognizes that vulnerable people are more at risk of their safeguard being compromised. This policy document will therefore demonstrate how Uttaran will meet its legal obligation and reassure its staff, participants, partners and other stakeholders that

- a) On what the can expect of Uttaran to do to ensure safeguard and protection of vulnerable people
- b) That they are able safely raise their concern through an established procedure without the risk of retaliation
- c) That all reports of abuse are dealt with equal seriousness and effectively
- d) That there is an efficient recording and monitoring system in place
- e) That all staff and partners of Uttaran are oriented and inducted about the safeguarding policy
- f) That all program and activities of Uttaran and partners are designed following the safeguarding policy
- g) That there is a strong "Safe" recruitment process is in place

Uttaran recognizes that the opportunity of safeguarding is not limited its programmes and activities but will continue to engage in dialogue with other stakeholders like partners, suppliers and clients. Any client, vendor, supplier or partners who will compromise the safeguarding policies of Uttaran, it will react with severity. Uttaran will continue to reach out to the communities and engage with the locals to fight against any form or kind of abuse and discrimination against vulnerable people.

Policy Statement

Uttaran has zero tolerance against abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people. Uttaran also recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that it has an obligation to put in place reasonable measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people with whom we work and those in the communities in which we live.

Principles

Uttaran works to the following key principles to protect vulnerable people:

- Everyone has an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or having a child, gender reassignment, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- The best interests of the vulnerable person are paramount and shall be the primary consideration in our decision making.
- Uttaran has a safeguarding responsibility to participants, staff and volunteers, including where down-stream partners are part of delivery. This duty of care extends to people at risk of abuse within the communities the organizations serve.
- Uttaran has a responsibility to identify vulnerable group and people among the employees and participants who are at greater risk of being victims of abuse and mitigate the extra risk that the group or individual face
- Uttaran must make safeguarding a central element of organizational culture and mitigate existing risk that may already exist in the programme of design and specific work practices.
- Uttaran will ensure that Staff are inducted in to the safeguarding, gender, anti harassment, child, and retaliation against anti-harassment and relevant policies and procedures as a key part of the recruitment and on boarding process.
- Uttaran will ensure that all its downstream partners, vendors, suppliers, client and other relevant stakeholders are aware and in compliance with Uttaran's Safeguarding Policies
- Uttaran recognizes that it will not be possible to completely remove abuse and therefore it will ensure that there are multiple clear safe and protected channel of reporting. Uttaran will treat each report with equal seriousness and effectiveness and ensure appropriate measures are taken. The organization must respect confidentiality and has the responsibility to protect both the victims and the whistleblower
- Uttaran has, in principle, a duty whenever abuse crosses the line into criminal behaviour to involve local authorities. However, the dangers in terms of lack of due process and disproportionate punishment should be taken into account.
- Uttaran commits to regularly monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policy and the policy must be reviewed every 3 years and earlier if required.
- Uttaran understands that importance of cultural sensitivity and there are many different ways of protecting vulnerable people. However, as a human right organization Uttaran endorse the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child general principle, that all the rights guaranteed by it must be available to all children without discrimination; and article 19 which accords equal rights to protection for children from abuse

Commitment

1. The UTTARAN organization and the UTTARAN leadership hereby pledge that the safeguarding of its people (employees, participants) and the people of the communities it serves against abuse, that is, against sexual harassment, child and adolescent abuse, bullying, discrimination, intimidation and violence, neglect and exploitation will continue to be a primary guiding principle in all its current and future development and humanitarian work
2. The UTTARAN organization and the UTTARAN leadership pledge that the commitment to safeguarding will continue to be articulated at the level of its values, code of conduct and work instructions. They pledge that safeguarding will continue to be incorporated in the design of all current and future programmes.
3. The UTTARAN organization and the UTTARAN leadership pledge that they will analyze, describe and document the safeguarding work they have done and do. Of particular importance are the descriptions of the ways safeguarding risks have successfully been avoided in the design of programmes. UTTARAN will make this research available to its partners and donors, as well as to other organizations in the sector.
4. The UTTARAN organization and the UTTARAN leadership pledge that they will continue to look for gaps and weaknesses in their safeguarding practices and address them wherever and whenever they are found. UTTARAN envisions this as an ongoing effort. System audits have been, are and will be an important element of this constant improvement of safeguarding practices.
5. The UTTARAN organization and the UTTARAN leadership pledge that they will continue to research, innovate and test new safeguarding solutions. They recognize that, because of the scale, breadth and interconnectedness of its programmes and enterprises, UTTARAN occupies a unique position in the sector. It accepts the responsibility that goes with that position. UTTARAN aspires to help the sector to overcome its safeguarding deficiencies.

Responsibilities


All people working with Uttaran which includes, regular staff, project staff, contractual staff, volunteer, part-time staff, consultants, downstream partners and sub-contractors are obliged to follow this policy and ensure an enabling environment which prevents exploitation and abuse and also encourages reporting of any compromise of the policy using appropriate procedure.

All people working with Uttaran will:

1. Read, Understand and Adhere the Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct of Uttaran
2. Make every effort to ensure and promote a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse in all working environment

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3. show equal dignity and attitude to all.
4. Strive to place the safety of children and vulnerable people above all consideration
5. Strive to create a positive, safe and secured atmosphere in its working area for all children, staff vulnerable adults and other participants
6. To immediately inform the responsible authority if any of the mentioned incident occurs or suspected to be occurred. Keeping silence after knowing or seeing this kind of incidents or hiding this kind of information will be treated as violation of this policy.
7. In a one-to-one situation with a child or young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the contact is taking place and why. If possible ensure another adult is in sight and that the child or young person knows another adult is around
8. Respect everyone's Privacy

All Staff and associated personal of Uttaran must follow Uttaran's:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Sexual Harassment policy
- Child protection policy
- Gender Policy
- Retaliation against Harassment policy

They Must Not:

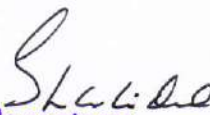
1. Physically assault anybody or Threaten anybody with physical assault
2. Hit or humiliate children and adolescents to discipline or correct them
3. Bully or Humiliate anybody
4. Discriminate against anybody, for example, based on religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, skin color, age, ethnicity, caste.
5. Sexually harass or assault anybody
6. Have any sexual interaction with children
7. Have any sexual interaction with adolescents under the age of consent
8. Have any sexual interaction with adults with special needs who are participants of the programme they are working with
9. Have any sexual interaction with women (or men) who are programme participants of the programme they are working with
10. Have any sexual interaction with fellow employees of Uttaran or partner organization in exchange for money, goods or favors or based on any form of coercion.
11. Neglect children, adolescents and adults with special needs who are entrusted to their care
12. Exploit children, adolescents, adults with special needs or other participants or fellow employees in any form

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