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# **Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguard Policy**

Approved : December 28, 2020

Participatory Research Action Network- PRAAN  
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## About Participatory Research Action Network- PRAAN

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**Evolution:** Participatory Research Action network- PRAAN is a non-profit and non-political organization that has been working for strengthening people's initiative to promote and ensure human rights, economic rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, climate resilience, governance, trade justice, rural livelihood global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity for sustainable development in the local level.

**Legal Entity:** PRAAN registered under the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) and Ministry of Social Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh.

**Beneficiaries:** The organization works intensively with youth, women, poor and marginal community, marginal, and underprivileged biodiversity dependent people i.e. forest people, indigenous communities, marginal farmers, fisher communities, and climate-vulnerable people.

**Vision:** PRAAN envisions a poverty-free pluralist society based on knowledge and technology where everyone's basic needs, rights, and information are ensured.

**Mission:** Work to fight poverty through participatory action research activities followed by social actions to eradicate poverty, lack of knowledge, and Injustice.

**General Committee:** The General Committee of 21 members is the supreme authority of PRAAN. This Committee elects the Executive Committee.

**Executive Committee:** PRAAN Executive Committee consists of 7 members who are elected by the General Committee. The Executive Committee members meet at a regular interval to oversee organizational performance.

**Working Area:** PRAAN works in Noakhali and Laksmipur for piloting projects and laboratory works, and the whole of the country for advocacy and campaign activities.

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Chief Executive, PRAAN

  
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Chairperson, PRAAN

## Section 02 : Introduction to the 'Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguard Policy'

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**2.1 Title of the Policy :** This Policy shall be named as 'Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguard Policy' of PRAN.

### 2.2 Objective

1. To protect the children and vulnerable from any physical, mental and other types of harassments at all level.
2. To create awareness and inspiration among the staff of the organization on the safety, security and dignity of children and vulnerable groups of the society.
3. To create awareness and inspiration among all the participants of different programs about this.

### 2.3 Jurisdiction of the policy:

The policy is applicable to all the permanent, temporary, contractual, volunteer and honorary staff of PRAAN.

### 2.4 Development Process of the Policy

PRAAN organized series of consultation with its staffs Members and reviewed different organizations' Child Protection policy, practice and procedure; and drafted this policy. It received feedback from beneficiaries and staff and included them later on into this policy.

### 2.4 Review and alteration of Policy

- The Executive Committee and the Competent Authority of PRAAN is the only authority who reserves the right to change, modify, suspend, interpret or cancel its policy clause.
- Proper justification must be required for modification and alteration of any word, section & subsection stated in this policy manual.


### 2.5 Approval and Effective Date of the policy

This Policy shall be effective from the day following the day of approval given on it by the Executive Committee of PRAAN and the employees of PRAAN shall be notified of the exact effective date of this policy.

### 2.6 Review of this policy:

This policy can be reviewed with the significant changes made in the national and international laws, policies, human rights declaration.

  
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Chief Executive, PRAN

  
Sharmin Neelormi  
Chairperson, PRAN



## Section 03 : The Policy

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### 3.1 Introduction

As a human right based organization, PRAAN believes that each and every child as well as vulnerable and disadvantaged people have right to live. It is, therefore, the responsibility of PRAAN to take necessary initiatives within the organization and communities. Every place under the organization will be safe and secured for children as well as all vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Every personnel of PRAAN are supposed to be the pathfinder to build a safe and secured society for them. The organization does believe that every staff's moral and professional responsibilities are to protect them with ensuring dignity for the vulnerable groups in every tire of the society.

### 3.2 Principles

This Safeguarding Policy is prepared based on Keeping Children Safe International Safeguarding Standards; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its related UN conventions; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and it's optional protocols); the UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and all child-related UN conventions; the national child protection and vulnerable adults legislation of Bangladesh and international good humanitarian practice.

### 3.3 PRAAN believe that

- All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection from harm.
- All have a duty of care to children, vulnerable adults with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
- The partners of the organization will also follow this policy.
- All the programs will be taken keeping in mind the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

### 3.4 Definitions and Terms

**3.4.1 Safeguard:** Safeguard is the responsibility that PRAAN has to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do no harm to children and vulnerable adults in any way for now and in future. If harmful issues occur then the organization takes over this and solves it.

**3.4.2 Children:** According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the child, any person below the age of 18, will be treated as child.

**3.4.3 Vulnerable Adult/Adult at risk:** Any person aged 18 or over, and if

- a. The adult has particular care, support or special needs and as a result abuse occurs when a vulnerable adult/adult like man, women, under taking care at risk is mistreated, neglected or harmed by another person who holds a position of trust.
- b. At a specific situation if anybody does not enjoy the rights (like security, shelter, water, food and others) or dependable on other person or institution like:
  - If lives in refugee camps or under the rehabilitation program of NGOs and due to no ability to control the situation then they are under exploitation and misbehavior and/or;
  - An adult live in unknown country or place, and/ or
  - If the adult due to work or social relation or due to agreement are

  
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controlled, forced to do, exploited or influenced by and agency

### 3.5 Definition of harmfulness

**3.5.1 Physical Assault:** Physical harmfulness by any accused persons, children or adults. These are hit, assaulting, using poison, killing through keeping under water, setting fire in the body. These are also physical assault if parents or attendants prolong any diseases or symptoms or due to ill interest prolong the sickness willingly.

**3.5.2 Sexual abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities that s/he does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**3.5.3 Sexual exploitation:** A form of sexual abuse that involves children or vulnerable adults being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It happens by forcing or using the children. Like making friendship with the children, vulnerable adults and beneficiaries, getting confidence of them and in a stage they are forced to involved with drug. In this situation an imbalance power avails among affected population and accused persons where the willingness or unwillingness of them are limited. It is one kind of exploitation of gambling and they also forget that to do these there needs to take their opinions. The sexual exploitation occurs different ways. Accused persons can do it through giving money, using emotions or by physical controlling or giving force among the staff or in a team it may occur. It happens in a community are adjacent community. Sometimes it happens also by a gang or accused group specially who are involved with the human trafficking.

**3.5.4 Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where a unexpected or attacking working atmosphere exists. Through this behavior the females are sexually harassed by men. But in different country laws agrees that the exploitation can be by men or women.

**3.5.5 Neglect and negligent behavior:** Allowing for context, resources and circumstances to show neglect and negligent treatment to a child, inability for meeting the basic physical and mental rights of the children continuously, which tends to a child for stunted of the physical growth along with mental and ethical growths. It is not ensured the appropriate supervision, protection from the harmfulness, nutrition and shelter, safe life and safe working environment. Taking drug or alcohol which affects the child who has not yet born, not good treatment of differently able children or being indifferent to the children are under neglected behaviors to the children

**3.5.6 Mental abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on mental wellbeing and mental health. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

  
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**3.5.7 Commercial exploitation:** Exploiting a child or a vulnerable adult in work or other activities for the benefit of others resulting stunting the physical and mental growth, ethical and social growth. It includes cheating, exploitation and forced labor.

**3.6 Employees:**

All staff from local and national level, volunteer and interns. Staff are:

- a. All local and national staff;
- b. All volunteers and probationary staff.

**3.7 Associates:**

- a. Vendor and consultant;
- b. EC/GC members
- c. All partners and community people
- d. Guests and visitors

**3.8 Prevention**

**3.8.1 Risk assessment/risk mitigation:** A risk assessment of all PRAAN operations, programs and project activities will be conducted (e.g. health risk, security risk, negative impact, etc.). Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimize the risk to children, and vulnerable adults and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

**3.8.2 Safe recruitment:** PRAAN will ensure that it applies the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies across the organization. Candidates are checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of safeguarding.

**3.8.3 Safety check:** Protection checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), forms an important part of our recruitment policy and covers all those representatives that we have an employment relationship with. If police checks are impossible, other checks are put into practice and noted. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self- declarations about previous convictions and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases.

  
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**3.8.4 Education/training:** All staff and associates receive safeguarding policy and training to help them understand why it is necessary to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults. Children and families will be informed on PRAAN's commitment to safeguarding and what to do if they have concerns about a child.

**3.8.5 Safe program design:** Organization will design its program keeping in mind that the programs/projects/activities will not put the children and vulnerable adults at risk. The aims of the organization will make the safe guard of the children and vulnerable adults. The policy will be as the cross-cutting issue of all the programs/projects.

**3.8.9 Communications — use of images and children's information:** In our use of information and visual images, both photographic stills and video, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. The organization will develop its

separate Communications policy/guidelines details with procedures.

### 3.9 Partners Obligations

Agreements with partners will include a statement that partners who do not have a safeguarding policy will either abide by PRAAN policy or develop their own as a condition of the partnership.

### 3.10 Reporting/responding to complaints

PRAAN will receive disclosures from children with sensitivity and will strive not to re-traumatize children in their handling of complaints. If a child or young person informs they are being, or have been, abused:

- a. Listen and accept what the child or vulnerable adult says but do not press for information;
- b. Listen the child or vulnerable adult know what we are going to do next and at we will let them know what happens;
- c. Do not investigate and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser;
- d. Record carefully what we have heard on the reporting form;
- e. Identifying information about children or vulnerable adults will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offence and will be investigated. If anybody comes to complaints then it should be taken serious.
- f. Complainant and all witnesses will assist the investigation committee appointed by the organization.
- g. There will be a guideline to guide the investigation process.

### 3.11 Effectivity, monitoring and revision

Safeguard issues are included in the risk register and also quarterly and annual reporting process of the organization. The Management and the EC will monitor the process that the safeguarding policy is in place.

**Approved by :** This policy has been reviewed and approved on December 28, 2020 in the Executive Committee meeting and effective from the same date onward. Manager (Finance & Operation) will monitor the implementation progress of this policy in the organization.

  
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