

Child Protection Policy

of

Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation



Date: 16 November, 2023



Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF)

Flat# A3, House# 14, Road# 13/C, Block-E
Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh


Syed Mahmudul Haq
Chairperson
Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Policy Statement	2
3. Objectives	2
4. Definitions	2
5. Guiding Principles	2
6. Roles and Responsibilities	3
7. Recruitment and Training	3
8. Code of Conduct	3
9. Reporting and Responding to Concerns	3
10. Monitoring and Evaluation	4
11. Partnerships and Collaboration	4
12. Prevention Strategies	4
13. Communication and Reporting	5
14. Support Services	5
15. Compliance and Accountability	5
16. Conclusion	6
Annexures	7
Annexure-1: Child Protection Incident Report Form	7
Annexure-2: Child Protection Reporting Procedures	9
Annexure-3: Responding To Disclosure	10

1. Introduction

Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF) is a non-profit research, advocacy and Business Support Organization (<http://shrimpfoundation.org/>). It was initially registered in 2003 under Trust Act 1882 and subsequently in 2008 under Directorate of Social Welfare Services in Dhaka (Registration No. DHA08488, Dated: 24 December, 2008). The organization was subsequently registered with Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) in 24th July 2023 (Registration No. S-14040/2023). The initial central objective of the Foundation has been to provide fisheries and aquaculture industries with critically needed supports for growth, sustainability and market access. It has also one of the BSFF's major objectives to realize the full potential of the fisheries sector, which in turn can contribute to the national policy efforts to reduce poverty, improve food and nutrition security, improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable sections, women empowerment, gender equality and youth inclusion, especially the ones in the coastal areas where salinity intrusion and associated impacts are being increasingly manifested. The general thrust of the activities of the organization has been making important contribution to small-fishermen in particular in terms of improving their livelihoods, income enhancing skills and their overall nutrition status. BSFF has rich experience of working with the Government and Development Partners like World Bank, USAID, USDA, UKAID, UNFAO, British Council, WorldFish, Winrock International, Swisscontact, Solidaridad Network Asia, University of Maryland and UN University at Iceland. It has Memorandum of Understandings with relevant public and private sector institutions at the national, regional, and international levels. It has a rich track record of implementing collaboratively developed by private sector stakeholders, the Government of Bangladesh especially the Department of Fisheries and international and national development partners. It has experience of working both at the national and local levels.

BSFF is engaged in a range of activities with an objective to realize the full potentials and transform the sector in a sustainable and equitable manner. With rich experience of sector specific project implementation, it extends a wide range of services to the country's fisheries and aquaculture sector to promote pro-growth initiatives, build up capacities, introduce new technologies in the production processes, facilitate trade, exports, investments and ensure social and gender inclusion in the sector. It has also been increasingly working in wider areas to create the enabling condition for private sector investments and compliance with relevant sector specific norms and standards and environmental sustainability imperatives through research, dialogue, policy advocacy, organizing training, field level intervention to enhance production and other initiatives to overcome challenges faced by the sector. BSFF's works over the years also have continued to include a very significant and robust livelihood improvement components and activities with positive ramification for the nutritional status of target beneficiaries of its activities who also include women, youth and vulnerable groups in particular. The BSFF activities, ever since its establishment, also have had important research component in the areas with special relevance to policy formulation for the aquaculture and fisheries sector of Bangladesh and introduction of growth and development oriented modern technology.

The Bangladesh Shrimp & Fish Foundation (BSFF) is committed to the safety and well-being of all children involved in its programs and activities. This Child Protection Policy outlines the principles, guidelines, and procedures that BSFF follows to safeguard children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and partners associated with BSFF.

2. Policy Statement

BSFF believes that all children have the right to be protected from harm and to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. We are dedicated to creating a culture of respect and protection for children, ensuring that their rights are upheld in all aspects of our work.

3. Objectives

1. To promote the safety and well-being of children in all BSFF activities and programs.
2. To prevent abuse and exploitation of children by implementing strict safeguarding measures.
3. To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and partners understand and adhere to child protection principles.
4. To provide clear procedures for reporting and responding to child protection concerns.

4. Definitions

- a) **Child:** Any individual under the age of 18 years.
- b) **Child Abuse:** Any form of physical, emotional, or sexual harm or neglect inflicted upon a child.
- c) **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education.
- d) **Exploitation:** The use of a child for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment.

5. Guiding Principles

- a) **Best Interests of the Child:** All decisions and actions concerning children must prioritize their best interests.
- b) **Non-Discrimination:** All children should be treated equally and with respect, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status.
- c) **Confidentiality:** Information regarding child protection concerns should be handled with confidentiality and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- d) **Transparency and Accountability:** BSFF will maintain transparency and accountability in all child protection matters, ensuring that policies and procedures are followed consistently.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) **Board of Directors:** Oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Child Protection Policy.
- b) **Executive Director:** Ensure the policy is enforced and integrated into all organizational activities.
- c) **Child Protection Officer (CPO):** Appointed to lead child protection efforts, provide training, and manage reports of child protection concerns.
- d) **All Staff and Volunteers:** Adhere to the Child Protection Policy and report any concerns or incidents.

7. Recruitment and Training

- a) **Recruitment Procedures:** Conduct background checks on all potential employees, volunteers, and contractors. Include child protection responsibilities in job descriptions. Require candidates to disclose any previous allegations or convictions related to child abuse.
- b) **Training and Awareness:** Provide mandatory child protection training for all staff, volunteers, and partners. Regularly update training materials to reflect best practices and legal requirements. Promote awareness of child protection issues through workshops, seminars, and informational materials.

8. Code of Conduct

BSFF has established a Code of Conduct to guide interactions with children and to prevent abuse and exploitation. All staff, volunteers, and partners must adhere to the following:

- a) **Respect and Dignity:** Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- b) **Appropriate Behavior:** Avoid any actions or language that could be perceived as abusive, exploitative, or harmful.
- c) **Positive Reinforcement:** Use positive reinforcement and constructive feedback when interacting with children.
- d) **Supervision:** Ensure that children are not left unattended or in the care of unvetted individuals.
- e) **Physical Contact:** Maintain appropriate physical boundaries; physical contact should only be for the child's benefit and with their consent.
- f) **Reporting Obligations:** Report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or neglect immediately to the CPO.

9. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

9.1. Reporting Mechanisms:

- **Internal Reporting:** Staff and volunteers must report any child protection concerns to the Child Protection Officer immediately.

- **External Reporting:** In cases where a child is at immediate risk, the CPO must report the concern to local authorities or child protection services.

9.2. Response Procedures:

- **Initial Assessment:** The CPO will conduct an initial assessment of the reported concern to determine the appropriate course of action.
- **Investigation:** If necessary, a formal investigation will be conducted, respecting confidentiality and due process.
- **Support for the Child:** Provide appropriate support and protection for the child, including medical, psychological, and legal assistance if required.
- **Disciplinary Actions:** Take disciplinary actions against individuals found to have violated the Child Protection Policy, up to and including termination of employment or partnership.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews of the Child Protection Policy to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- Feedback Mechanisms:** Collect feedback from staff, volunteers, partners, and children to improve child protection practices and address any gaps or issues.
- Annual Reporting:** Provide an annual report to the Board of Directors on the implementation and effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy.

11. Partnerships and Collaboration

- Partner Agreements:** Ensure that all partners, contractors, and grantees adhere to BSFF's Child Protection Policy or have an equivalent policy in place.
- Capacity Building:** Support partners and stakeholders in building their capacity to protect children through training and resource sharing.
- Networking:** Collaborate with local and international organizations to strengthen child protection systems and share best practices.

12. Prevention Strategies

- Risk Assessments:** Conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential child protection risks in BSFF programs and activities. Develop and implement strategies to mitigate identified risks.
- Safe Environments:** Create and maintain safe physical environments for children by ensuring facilities are secure and child-friendly. Establish clear rules and guidelines for child-friendly spaces.

- c. **Child Participation:** Encourage and facilitate the participation of children in developing and reviewing child protection measures. Ensure that children's voices are heard and considered in all matters affecting them.
- d. **Community Engagement:** Raise awareness about child protection issues within the community. Engage community leaders and members in promoting and safeguarding the rights and welfare of children.

13. Communication and Reporting

- a) **Communication Guidelines:** Ensure that communication about children, including their images and personal information, respects their privacy and dignity. Obtain informed consent from children and their guardians before using their information or images in any materials.
- b) **Incident Reporting:** Establish a clear and accessible process for reporting child protection concerns or incidents. Ensure that all staff, volunteers, and partners are aware of and can easily use the reporting process.
- c) **Confidentiality:** Maintain confidentiality in handling child protection concerns and reports. Share information only with those who need to know and are involved in managing or resolving the concern.

14. Support Services

- a) **Counseling and Psychological Support:** Provide access to counseling and psychological support services for children affected by abuse, exploitation, or neglect. Ensure that support services are child-friendly and accessible.
- b) **Legal Assistance:** Facilitate access to legal assistance for children and their families when required. Ensure that legal processes are conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of children.
- c) **Medical Care:** Ensure that children receive prompt and appropriate medical care in cases of abuse or neglect. Establish partnerships with healthcare providers to facilitate access to medical services.

15. Compliance and Accountability

- a) **Policy Compliance:** Ensure that all staff, volunteers, and partners sign a commitment to adhere to the Child Protection Policy. Include compliance with the Child Protection Policy in performance evaluations and organizational audits.
- b) **Grievance Mechanism:** Establish a grievance mechanism for staff, volunteers, and community members to raise concerns about child protection practices without fear of retribution. Ensure that grievances are handled promptly and fairly.
- c) **Continuous Improvement:** Foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and updating child protection practices. Learn from incidents and feedback to enhance the effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy.

16. Conclusion

BSFF is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all children involved in its programs and activities. By implementing this comprehensive Child Protection Policy, BSFF aims to uphold the highest standards of child protection and ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of every child. This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practices and respond to emerging challenges in child protection.

Annexures

Annexure-1: Child Protection Incident Report Form

Please complete this form if you believe that child abuse or exploitation, or a breach of the Child Protection Code of Conduct, may have occurred or that a child's safety is in danger.

All child protection concerns should be reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or if the CP Coordinator is not available report to the SG.

This report must be treated in strict confidence.

Today's date:

Today's Time:

Today's Venue/Address:

Name of Child:

Age of child:

Name of parents or guardian:

DETAILS OF CONCERN / SUSPICION / INCIDENT

Please fill out as many sections as possible with as much detail as you can. You do not need to have all the information or details.

1. Describe what happened: time/dates/name of persons involved/witnesses'/ behavior or signs observed/any other detail

2. Details of any conversation with the child

3. Have you contacted anyone about this concern? Yes / No (Please circle one)

4. If so, who have you contacted?

Please sign this report and print your name and your position in the organization

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Name:.....

Position:.....

Office Use

Name of person who received Incident Report:

Date Received:

Action taken:

.....

Attach all documentation

Signature and name of person who has dealt with report

.....

Annexure-2: Child Protection Reporting Procedures

Who can Report?	All BSFF people including Board, staff, volunteers, partners, contractors, and sub-contractors have an obligation to report, and all other people including children and other members of the community may report
------------------------	--



What to Report	Any direct or indirect disclosure, witnessed or suspected child abuse, and all breaches of the Code of Conduct. Complete the Child Protection Incident Form (Annex 1)
-----------------------	---



When to Report	Immediately, or as soon as possible If the child's safety or welfare is at high risk, please contact Police and Welfare Services immediately
-----------------------	---



Report to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Complaints Phone: 88-02222293406 • Email: info@shrimpfoundation.org • The Child Protection Officer
------------------	--



Action Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the level of risk to child and alleged perpetrator 2. With Director HR develop Action Plan to ensure the child's Safety 3. Notify other relevant personnel if required, such as the Director of the alleged BSFF person and the Secretary General 4. Provide feedback to the victim, if wanted by the victim
If High Risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report concerns to relevant authorities including Police and Child and Welfare Services within 24 hours 2. Ensure referral and support for child and notifier including Medical through decided by Secretary General and Counselling through decided Secretary General
If Low Risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Manage Internally 4. No Further Action

NOTE: Authorities will be contacted immediately only if the allegations indicate a criminal offence. Not all reports become a police matter.

Annexure-3: Responding To Disclosure

Receiving a disclosure from a child can be an upsetting and confronting situation. It is important that you respond to the child appropriately.

Steps To Take When Receiving Disclosure from A Child:

1. Listen to the Child:

- Maintain a calm appearance
- Be patient
- Give the child space and time to tell you their concern at their own pace and in their own words- do not ask leading questions;
- Don't interrupt;
- Accept the child will tell you as much or as little as they want to;
- Never push the child into giving details of the abuse - your role is to listen to what he/she wants to tell you.

2. Reassure the Child:

- Tell the child that you believe him or her;
- Tell the child that that they have done the right thing by telling you;
- Re-assure the child that the abuse is not his/her fault;
- Acknowledge the child's bravery and strength.

3. Tell The Child What You Plan to Do Next

- Explain to the child that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to the BSFF Child Protection Officer.

4. Report

- Report the disclosure using the BSFF reporting procedures

5. Do Not:

- Make promises you can't keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
- Attempt to investigate what has been said
- Confront the alleged perpetrator.