

Child Protection Policy

of
Children At Risk Network Nepal (CarNetNepal)
2065

Statement of Commitment

CarNetNepal is a network of churches, organizations, children homes, individuals, that advocates, restore, build capacity to enable child care workers and provide services to children so that children of Nepal will celebrate the fullness of life.

The Bible recognizes that children are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). We are encouraged and instructed as parents and caretakers of children to protect and nurture them on this foundation (Matthew 19, 13-14).

CarNetNepal commits this Child Protection Policy (CPP) approved and endorsed it as a general directive to safeguard and protect children from any kind of abuses and exploitation. CarNetNepal believes the implementation of this CPP will have clear guidance on staffs, board members, volunteers and all the implemented networks and partner organizations, own behavior around children and on what to do if they notice or are informed about inappropriate behavior on the children.

Being convinced of the importance and necessity for ensuring the secured and favorable conditions of our children who are at high risk of losing their basic rights and desiring to contribute with our joint effort for safeguarding and protecting their rights now and in future, CarNetNepal ensures to bind and abide of this CPP for its Board members, staff, volunteers, **local networks** and **partner organizations** in **any period of time**.

This policy is based on the child-rights framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 and The Child Rights endorsed by The Government of Nepal (Children Act 1992).

- 1. Name:** The official name of this document shall be CarNetNepal's **Child Protection Policy**
- 2. Commencement:** This Policy shall be applicable to the organization from the date approved by the CarNetNepal's executive Board and for the partners and local network, from the day they signed on it.
- 3. Objective:** To make the working members in an organization aware about child protection and keep children safe.

6. Definitions:

6.1 Child: A child is a person who is under 18 years of age as defined under in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6.2 Child Protection Policy: This policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates our Commitment to safeguard children.

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has clearly identified as the basis for child protection (where?). It has been ratified by the Government of Nepal (when?).

Children are protected

Although no standards or process can offer complete protection for children, following these standards will minimize the risk of abuse and exploitation to children.

Agency representatives are protected

By implementing these standards all representatives will have clear guidance concerning their own behavior around children and on what to do if they notice or are informed about inappropriate behavior on the part of others.

The organization is protected

By implementing these standards, organizations are making clear their commitment to safeguard children. The standards will help them to move towards best practice in this area and deter those who would wish to harm children from joining the organization. See national Plan of Action for Children (Page 13) from The Government of Nepal.

6.3 Child abuse: Child abuse is the misuse of power and authority by someone who is in a position of authority over a child. Abuse occurs when adults or other children seriously hurt children either physically or in some other ways. The types of child abuse commonly seen are:

- 6.3.1 Physical abuse
- 6.3.2 Emotional abuse
- 6.3.3 Sexual abuse
- 6.3.4 Neglect
- 6.3.5 Forced Marriage
- 6.3.6 Child Labor
- 6.3.7 .Discrimination
- 6.3.8 Spiritual abuse
- 6.3.9 Harmful Cultural Practice

6.3.1 Physical abuse: It occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens or fails to prevent injury to a child and can take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing, beating, hitting, smacking, pinching, poisoning, scalding, cutting, scratching, throwing, suffocating, drowning.

6.3.2 Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse of a child includes the followings:

- Persistent or severe attack on a child's self-esteem, for example, by name calling, blackmailing, ridiculing, isolating, making the child feel worthless or inadequate, degrading punishment.
- Failure to provide care and affection resulting in adverse effects on the behavior and emotional development of the child, for example by rejection, emotional ill treatment, isolation, lack of supervision and normal living experiences.
- Inappropriate expectations imposed on the child.

6.3.3 Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse of a child, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening includes the following:

- Inappropriate sexual behavior with a child. This may include sexiest remarks, fondling, incest, rape or other sexual intrusion.
- The child is encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual behavior that is not appropriate according to the child's age and development.
- Pornography: making a child take part in or watch pornographic material.
- Prostitution and other forms of demeaning or sexual exploitation.
- Forming inappropriate emotional attachments that lead to sexual abuse of the child (such as grooming)

6.3.4 Neglect: Failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, medical care, shelter, supervision, basic education, to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

6.3.5 Forced marriage: This includes a marriage without consent (16 years legally) of the marrying partners defined by the prevailing law of Nepal.

6.3.6 Child Labor: This means a child placed to work, which is hazardous and likely to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (definition from the UNCRC). It can happen by force, promise or pressure lay upon the child and regardless of the child's consent.

6.3.7 Discrimination: This means, a child should not be discriminated, whatever their race, religion, abilities whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

6.3.8 Spiritual Abuse: Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader, or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority misuses their power of authority, and the trust

placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child. It can be linked to other kinds of abuse, such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

6.3.9 Harmful Cultural Practice: Harmful Cultural Practice is the activities (eg. teaching disobedience towards the elders) done by force or by luring the children with the intention of abusing the child or fulfilling the doers will. This type of activities may affect the child physically, emotionally, socially or sexually. He who teaches or compels the children to do so also includes the harmful practice.

6.4 Agencies to use the policy: This Child Protection Policy is applicable to all staff, board members, volunteers of CarNetNepal and all its partner organizations and local networks.

6.5 Child Protection Officer (CPO): CPO means an officer or employee of CarNetNepal who has functions, powers or duties in relation to the care, protection or welfare of children.

6.6 Local Networks: Local Networks means those churches or organizations (including children homes) which performs the activities (eg awareness campaign to intervene child sexual abuse and child trafficking) as fostered by CarNetNepal at its target community.

6.7 Partner Organizations: Partner organization refers to that organization, church and children homes, where the child welfare programs are run (eg. transit shelter for rescued children) and those programs are supported by donor agencies through CarNetNepal. The partner agencies sign a written agreement with CarNetNepal.

6.8 Monitoring Unit: Monitoring Unit is a group of three people including CPO, a CarNetNepal's board member and the CarNetNepal's coordinator who will look after and take action whether the CPP in partner organization, local networks and churches (signing the agreement to implement CPP) are followed or not. The unit is headed by the CPO.

6.9 Time Period: Time Period refers to any time regardless of office working hours.

7. Implementation of CPP

The agencies abiding and accepting this CPP should follow the following procedures:

- Appoint a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC).
- The CPC will organize a team of maximum three people from within the organization. It is the CPC's responsibility to maintain confidentiality and disseminate the policies.
- The CPC should plan to overcome the barriers while handling any incidents on child abuse.

8. Prevention

8.1 Protection of children at Children Homes and Orphanages:

I. Precautions may be applied as follows:

For the Child:

- Maintain secure environment.
- Display the basic child protection rules and regulations in every home in child-friendly language.
- Increase the participation of children in the design and implementation of programmes affecting their rights and well being, to ensure that assistance responds to their needs and that they are fully aware of services and resource available to them.
- Form a peer protection groups from among the children. Each peer group has a group leader.
- Child awareness programs and prevention strategy should give knowledge and inform children about abuse.
- Increase access to and confidentiality of complaint mechanisms so that children are more likely to seek help when they feel at risk or have been abused. It should encourage children to break the “culture of silence” in cases of abuse. It should empower them by building confidence, and giving life skills in order to cope with risk situations.
- Children are provided with information on where to go for help and advice in relation to abuse
- Inter-Home relationship should be maintained to increase awareness about their own situation however within the confines of confidentiality (information provided on a “need-to-know-basis”).

For the Staff of the Organization:

Should:

- Foster an environment of respect, trust and accountability so that children feel comfortable talking about their problems, staff respect children’s boundaries, and adults and children are willing to challenge exploitative or abusive behavior at an early stage.
- Should be able to recognize and avoid any situation that may create risk for a child.
- Increase the number of female staff members, particularly in activities that affect girls.
- Avoid unhealthy attachments with a child
- Always act responsibly and keep safe by minimizing the risks when in contact with children who display sexualized or inappropriate behavior.
- Visiting guidelines should be displayed and followed strictly
- Maintain adoption criteria according to the Government rules
- Make staff aware of sanctions for failing to respect the policy
- Be trained through awareness programs and prevention strategies to raise their awareness and knowledge.
- Ensure visibility, whenever possible with children and apply the two adult rules or arrange a suitable alternative.

Staff and Others (our networks signing the agreement to follow the CPP – see annex for details) should not:

- Physically assault or hit a child or discipline a child in a way in breach of this Policy. This effectively means no tolerance of any form of violence against the child.
- Don't take images of children (photos, video, etc.), which is detrimental, sexually explicit or undermines the child's dignity in any way.
- try to develop any type of relationship that will lead to harming the child
- use of languages or any other seductive or abusive statements
- develop relation with individuals, organizations etc that would induce any form of child trafficking and abuse.
- To invite a child to the place of residence unsupervised or stay overnight with any child unsupervised is not allowed.
- Abuse their own children and not employ child laborers in their private homes.

8.2 *Protection of children in the organizations:*

Minimum requirements for organizations to observe when dealing with children:

- The organization should take care, that there is enough adult staff to take care of the children and protect them.
- Staff Recruitment: Every applicant will be carefully screened during the recruitment period, including references and a police record when possible. They have to give a statement that there have been no previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior or improper conduct. The applicants have to sign a written agreement to follow this policy.
There have to be clear job descriptions and roles, and clear management structures should be in place. All applicants should be over age of 18 years.
- Promote holistic development of the child
- The Child Protection Coordinator should ensure that child protection measures are implemented.

8.3 *Protection of children in the Church*

Prevention in the church may be taken as follows:

- Children should be respected as they are.
- Children should be not discriminated in any way on any basis.
- Children should be motivated to express their feelings and thoughts.
- Children should be given an opportunity to demonstrate their gifts, talents and creative ideas (physical, emotional, social).
- All the people attending the church should be aware for God's concern for children and be aware of child rights
- Children should get knowledge about their rights

- The Church seriously will handle appeals and grievances of child abuse. The Church will maintain the confidentiality on any actions that might humiliate a child's feelings.
- The Church will suggest/guide the parents for children's safety
- Teaching of family values
- The church should take responsibility of selection and supervision of volunteers working with children and recommend them to sign the policy.
- The church should not employ the children less than 18 years.

8.4 Child Protection Officer:

CarNetNepal will appoint or designate a Child Protection Officer. Policy implementation within the organization and train that person on the policy.

9. Procedures

Procedures in order to make sure that the policy is implemented are prescribed as follows:

9.1 Detection

- The Child Protection Officer (CPO) of CarNetNepal, and its member organizations, partners, Local networks etc. may conduct interaction, collect reports and hear the complaints for which it may visit the organization, send questionnaire, and ask particular information based on which it may keep the record of the facts for necessary actions. The CPO for each organization or church signing the agreement shall nominate the CPO.
- The concerned organizations should send to CarNetNepal every four months a report on the progress and actual conditions of the implementation of their policy.

9.2 Investigation

- If a child tells you that it has been abused, take it seriously, let it know that you need to tell someone else, let it know what you are going to do next and record carefully what you have heard while it is still fresh in your mind. Include the date and time of your conversation and any incident disclosed.
- Where there is an allegation, first inform the child protection office (CPO). If the CPO is subject of the allegation inform the Co-ordination Unit which includes 2 CarNetNepal's board members with the coordinator of CarNetNepal.
- The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.
- If a member of staff is the subject of an allegation of child abuse/ or abuse of humanitarian aid, that staff member will be asked to take leave from their duties

until an investigation has been completed. Such suspension does not imply guilt, but rather protects all parties whilst an investigation is undertaken.

- Where it is established that a breach of this policy or abuse has taken place, the guilty party will be dismissed from their post immediately and the matter handed over to the police for necessary legal actions.
- If abuse has not occurred, steps will be taken to sensitively reinstate the staff, board members and the volunteers.
- The CPO shall organize workshops and interaction among the representatives of different churches, partner organizations and networks etc to exercise the rights to investigate any issue raised, complaints filed and events taken place in relation to the implementation of the CPP for its own use and confirmation of the facts. For this it may use all kinds of effective means and ways according to the prevailing laws of Nepal.
- The concerned organizations should provide necessary help and assist the **monitoring Unit** to investigate the facts.

9.3 *Restoration*

- Abuse causes psychosocial Trauma and developmental stagnation. The child needs medical care, support and counseling. If needed, or in case the situation doesn't improve, refer the child to professional services.
- If a child is found neglected of its legal rights through the detection and investigations, the Co-ordination Unit shall warn the concerned organization to restore such a right of the child within a given timeframe.
- If the organization fails to restore a child to his/her normal conditions as stated above, the Co-ordination Unit should take the issue to the competent court of justice for legal actions for the protection and reinstatement of the child.

10. Recommendations

This Child Protection Policy has been prepared and expected to be practiced by all the subscribing member organizations by their own consent. The provisions stipulated in this policy document are not enforceable by law and are only the general directives for those subscribers signing it as it appears on the annex page.

CarNetNepal

I/we..... have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this child protection policy. I/we agree to comply with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practice while associated with CarNetNepal.

Name :.....

Designation :.....

Signature :

Date :.....