



## ACEF

### Safeguarding Guidelines for Children and Youth

4/22/2022

#### 1. Purpose: ACEF's vision and mission are:

##### Vision

To create a society in which people can share in the bonds of mutual support and solidarity knowing that the dignity of each person will be respected.

##### Mission

To fulfil a calling to live in solidarity with others, and to work in partnership with the people in other parts of Asia.

To provide educational opportunities for younger generations to experience personal growth so that they will be equipped to build a world where people of different cultures and ethnicities can respect one another. In this regard, ACEF is committed to connecting the peoples of Japan and Bangladesh by creating spaces where each can learn from each other and experience mutual growth.

ACEF has been involved in supporting the education of children in Bangladesh since 1990. ACEF also encourages Japanese children and youth (from junior and senior school to university students) by facilitating study tours abroad as well as various activities in Japan.

These guidelines were established to provide for an environment where all Japanese and Bangladeshi children and youth involved in ACEF activities can feel safe by knowing that their dignity is cherished and that they will not be exposed to harm of violence such as abuse, exploitation, physical punishment, and sexual violence. These guidelines also establish the roles and responsibilities of the organization as well as point out the standards to which individuals involved with ACEF should comply.

“The Code of Conduct for Children and Youth” is an accompanying document that explicitly describes what individuals involved with ACEF must comply with. The guidelines together with the Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically and revised as needed.

#### 2. Scope of Application

The people mentioned below are subject to these guidelines.

- ACEF Staff ( executive director, full-time/part-time staff)
- ACEF board members including directors, auditors, and councilors.
- Organizations as well as people involved with ACEF such as interns, volunteers, and students from the Service-Learning courses offered at various universities.
- ACEF study tour participants (including children and youth)
- Partner organizations that collaborate with ACEF such as BDP (Basic Development Partners)

#### 3. Principles



By implementing the guidelines, the following principles will be upheld.

1) Responsibility of the Organization

ACEF will pursue the following courses of action to take responsibility as an organization.

1 Enlightenment

- All individuals involved with ACEF will receive an explanation of these guidelines so that individuals understand their duties and responsibilities as stipulated in the guidelines.
- The ACEF office and board of directors will update their system of operation with applicable documentation to establish the procedures and methods needed for the implementation of the guidelines.
- The ACEF office and board of directors will incorporate the safeguarding guidelines in the development of programs and budgets, the recruitment of staff, and the issuance of annual reports.

2 Consultation / Reporting

- A system will be developed in which all those concerned can consult and report whenever the dignity of children and youth is violated through ACEF activities.
- Members of the Human Rights Committee will receive training to create a system where the voices of children and youth will be heard.<sup>1</sup>

3 Measures to be Taken

- The ACEF office and Human Rights Committee will investigate as soon as they receive complaints/reports or consultation from children and youth, and will take necessary measures in all earnestness.

4 Monitoring and Accountability

- The ACEF office will report the progress of the implementation of these guidelines to the Board of Directors. The Board will review the progress at the scheduled board meetings to determine whether these guidelines are appropriately operated or not. The accountability of ACEF as an organization will be accomplished by this intentional procedure.

2) The Responsibility of Individuals

All those involved with ACEF (as mentioned in “Scope of Application” above) must understand the guidelines as well as the Code of Conduct for Children and Youth so that they respect the dignity of children and youth and do not violate their rights. In the case that someone sees or hears about issues that go against the guidelines and the Code of Conduct, it is mandatory that all people involved with ACEF will report to the ACEF office and Human Rights Committee so that they can fulfil their responsibilities.

3) Protection of Personal Information and Confidentiality

In the case where information from reports, consultations, and or investigations based on these guidelines are dealt with, it is mandatory for all people including ACEF office staff and committee

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<sup>1</sup> ACEF has a committee that provides consultation on the issues related to human rights. Privacy of the person making the complaint / report is protected.



members who are involved with the implementation of countermeasures to observe confidentiality. All collected information must be recorded and archived in a way that protects privacy.

#### 4 ) Value the Participation and Opinion of Children and Youth

For people who are involved in the operation of these guidelines including ACEF staff and board members, it is essential to give children and youth all the information they need so that they can fully understand the contents of the guidelines. It is also mandatory for ACEF staff and board members to provide an environment where children and youth can participate in the process of the operation and revision of these guidelines, and where they feel they are respected such that they can express their opinions freely.

#### 5 ) Collaboration with Partner Institution

In the case when ACEF collaborates with other institutions and implements projects and events in which children and youth are involved, both institutions will cooperate with each other to execute these guidelines, with a full understanding of the responsibility to ensure the protection of the rights of children and youth. As for activities conducted in Bangladesh, ACEF asks partner organizations such as BDP to fully comply with the guidelines and join in creating an environment where children and youth involved in local projects feel safe and secure without the fear of being exposed to any kind of violence.

#### 4. Definitions of Words

- Safeguarding Guidelines for Children and Youth

It is necessary for officers, employees, and all ACEF-related parties or organizations, as well as affiliated business organizations, not to harm children and youth in any way, in other words, to avoid exposing them to the risk of abuse, exploitation, or danger. The guidelines imply that, and information brought forward will be treated as a matter of responsibility for the organization.<sup>2</sup>

- Children

Based on the definition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), this applies to everyone who is under the age of 18.

- Youth

Based on the definition of the United Nations, this applies to everyone who is between the age of 15 to 24 years of age.

- Abuse towards Children and Youth

Various forms of physical, sexual, or psychological violence against children or youth include violence such as the following:

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<sup>2</sup> Keeping Children Safe (2014) *Child safeguarding standards and how to implement them*



**Abuse :** Under Japanese law, abuse applies to situations of abuse by guardians toward their children by physically, psychologically, and sexually abusing them. This also includes neglect. The ACEF Safeguarding Guidelines for Children and Youth, however, also point to inappropriate acts by adults (not limited to guardians) toward children in general including harassment and or abusive language.

**Exploitation :** The use of a situation of unequal power to exchange of money, gifts and food, etc, in order to influence another person to engage in works or activities that violate their mental health, as well as their social and emotional development.

**Sexual Violence :** This includes all sexual violence such as asking for acts or postures that are sexually suggestive, engaging in sexual-related activities, and or having sexual relations.

**Corporal Punishment :** The use of physical punishment by authority figures such as parents, teachers, and adults toward children and youth that causes physical and psychological agony.