



Safeguarding Policy

I. Introduction and Scope

1.1 Purpose of the Policy:

The Safeguarding Policy of RAPiD is designed to uphold our unwavering commitment to the safety, protection, and well-being of all vulnerable individuals associated with our organization. This policy establishes the framework within which all members of RAPiD, including employees, partners, and subcontractors, work together to prevent and address any form of abuse towards children, vulnerable adults, and any individuals at risk. It reflects our dedication to creating a secure and nurturing environment where safeguarding is ingrained in every aspect of our operations.

1.2 Scope of the Policy:

This policy applies universally across all levels and areas of RAPiD's operations, including but not limited to our policy research, consultancy assignments, internal administration, and interactions with external partners and communities. It is mandatory for:

- All RAPiD employees, irrespective of their position or role.
- Consultants, contractors, and subcontractors engaged in RAPiD's projects and activities.
- Partners and associated organizations working collaboratively with RAPiD.
- The principles and obligations outlined in this policy extend to any setting or situation where there is a possibility of contact or interaction with vulnerable persons, whether directly through our projects or indirectly through associated activities.

1.3 Commitment to Safeguarding:

RAPiD commits to:

- Actively promoting the welfare and rights of children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse, harassment, bullying, and discrimination.
- Continually enhancing our safeguarding practices through regular reviews, updates, and training.
- Engaging with stakeholders transparently and respectfully, placing the safety and dignity of vulnerable persons at the forefront of our mission.

1.4 Legal and Ethical Framework:

Our policy is underpinned by relevant national and international laws and ethical standards pertaining to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. RAPiD is dedicated to complying with these legal requirements and upholding the highest ethical standards in all our endeavors.

II. Definitions and Key Concepts

2.1 Vulnerable Persons:

Refers to individuals who may be at increased risk of harm or abuse due to factors like age, disability, mental health, socio-economic status, or other specific vulnerabilities. This includes children (under 18 years) and adults who require additional protection or support.

2.2 Abuse:

Encompasses a range of harmful behaviors, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, and discrimination. Abuse can occur in various forms and settings and is characterized by the misuse of power or trust. This policy considers the following as abuse (but not limited to):

- Physical abuse or physical injury, such as evidence of hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- Emotional abuse where harm is done by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats and not giving care and affection.
- Sexual abuse where exploitation occurs. These include all forms of sexual activities including pornography.
- Neglect and negligent treatment, where basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not fulfilled, or when there is a failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment of a vulnerable person's health or development.
- Exchanging of benefits (for example goods, food and money in exchange for sexual favors)
- Bullying and cyberbullying or discriminatory abuse, which could include physical or verbal intimidation, including hateful remarks based on age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, economic status, sexual orientation or identity; emotional intimidation; for example, excluding or isolating someone.
- Compel or persuade a vulnerable person for acts of slavery, illegal organ donorship, forced labour and work in risk-exposed condition.
- Radicalization, where the aim is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be through a direct relationship, or through social media.

2.3 Safeguarding:

The actions and measures taken to protect vulnerable persons from abuse and harm, ensuring their health, well-being, and dignity are upheld. Safeguarding is a collective responsibility and an integral part of RAPID's ethos and operations.

III. Policy Statement

3.1 Commitment to Safeguarding:

RAPID is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protecting them from harm. We recognize the inherent right of every individual to be safe and treated with respect and dignity.

3.2 Zero-Tolerance Approach:

RAPID adopts a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse, harassment, bullying, sexual exploitation, and discrimination. We are dedicated to creating an environment where safeguarding concerns are taken seriously, and appropriate actions are promptly taken.

3.3 Inclusivity and Respect:

Our safeguarding measures apply universally, irrespective of an individual's age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, economic status, sexual orientation, or identity. We advocate for an inclusive approach that respects the diverse backgrounds and needs of all individuals.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 All Employees:

Every employee is responsible for understanding and adhering to this safeguarding policy. They are required to remain vigilant and report any concerns or suspected abuse to the designated authority within RAPID.

4.2 Project Team Leaders and Managers:

Team Leaders and Managers are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding risks are assessed and managed in their respective projects. They must also ensure that their teams are aware of and comply with the safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Executive Director:

The Executive Director oversees the overall implementation of the safeguarding policy, ensuring it is integrated into all aspects of RAPID's operations. They are also responsible for addressing reported concerns and ensuring appropriate actions are taken.

V. Reporting Procedures

5.1 Reporting Mechanism:

If any employee or associate suspects or witnesses abuse, they must report it immediately to their Project Team Leader or directly to the Executive Director. Confidentiality will be maintained at all stages of the process.

5.2 Handling Reports:

Upon receiving a report, the Project Team Leader or the Executive Director will promptly assess the situation and determine the appropriate course of action, which may include internal investigation, referral to relevant authorities, or provision of support to the affected individuals.

5.3 Whistleblower Protection:

Individuals who report concerns in good faith will be protected from retaliation or any form of disadvantage. RAPID commits to supporting and safeguarding those who raise concerns.

VI. Training on the Policy and Preventing Measures

- All RAPID employees will be made familiar about the safeguarding principles and practices. They will have access to this policy documents. From time to time, they will be reminded of the policy in place and their role in upholding the guidelines.
- During the orientation of new staff members RAPID Human Resource Manager and/or Executive Director will inform the employees of the safeguarding issues and policy.
- Regular risk assessments will be conducted to identify and mitigate potential safeguarding risks in all RAPID projects and activities.
- RAPID commits to safe recruitment practices, including necessary background checks for all new hires, to ensure they are suitable to work with vulnerable persons.
- During the probationary period of newly recruited staff members they will be assessed on their compliance with safeguarding provisions as well.

VII. Digital Safety

7.1 Online Safeguarding:

RAPID recognizes the importance of digital safety, particularly in protecting vulnerable individuals from online abuse and exploitation. All digital interactions, including those on social media, must adhere to safeguarding principles.

7.2 Safe Communication:

Communications involving vulnerable individuals should respect their privacy and consent. Care must be taken to avoid sharing personal or sensitive information online.

7.3 Addressing Cyber Risks:

Employees are required to be vigilant against cyber risks such as cyberbullying, online fraud, and exposure to inappropriate content. RAPID will provide guidelines and training on identifying and responding to these risks.

VIII. Policy Review and Update

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- Commitment to Continuous Improvement: RAPID is committed to the continuous improvement of our Safeguarding Policy. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with current best practices and legal requirements.
- Communication of Changes: Any changes or updates to the policy will be communicated clearly to all staff members, and appropriate briefing will be provided to ensure understanding and compliance.