

## IIHMR, Bangalore Child Protection Policy

### 1.1 Preamble

IIHMR, Bangalore recognizes the inalienable right of every child in the State of Karnataka, be it a resident of Karnataka, a citizen of India or a foreign national to 'protection and safety' from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Institute is engaged in partnering with various stakeholders who are marginalised and work with the grassroots and promotes the wellbeing of all children whose lives are directly impacted through its Projects. Thus, it is committed to ensure that this right is respected, promoted and protected to enable children to live a life of dignity and develop to their fullest potential in an environment that fosters child participation.

### 1.2 Vision

Strives to be the leading organisation in the achievement of a safe and caring environment for children

### 1.3 Aim

IIHMR aims to create 'child safe' environments, where children are respected, protected, empowered and active in their own protection, and where staffs are skilled, confident, competent and well supported in meeting their protection responsibilities.

Envisioning the Child Protection Policy which is already implemented by Government of Karnataka (2016) and the vision statement made in Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) which cuts across gender, as well as economic, social, cultural or geographical differences, IIHMR will take cognizance and commits to comply with all Partnership Standards for child protection designed to safeguard children from exploitation, neglect, sexual and physical abuse. IIHMR persistently observes the need to reduce the risk to children in all its Projects and Programmes.

IIHMR is committed to ensure all children are safe and protected. The safety, rights and well-being of children participating in the Institute's programs is a priority in its operations. The intent of this Code of Conduct to protect children is to guide the employees, students and volunteers in developing appropriate relationships with the children involved in activities or programs undertaken by the Institute and to create a safe environment for the children, wherever the project/program is initiated in the community.

The present policy also intends to increase the awareness on child protection in the community and in the family through all its stakeholders.

### 1.4. Definitions under the Child Protection Policy

- a) '**Child**' is defined as any person under the age of 18 years or one who has not completed eighteen years of age as per Section 2 (k) of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act 2000.

- b) **“Child Survival and Development Rights”**: These are rights to the resources, skills and contributions necessary for the survival and full development of the child including rights to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care, leisure and recreation, cultural activities and information about their rights. These rights require the existence of the means to fulfil the rights and also access to them. Specific articles address the needs of child refugees, children with disabilities and children of minority or indigenous groups.
- c) **“Child Protection”**, within the scope of this policy, is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that IIHMR undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
- d) **“Child Abuse”** is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.
- e) **“Child Rights Friendly”**: means any process and interpretation, attitude, treatment and environment, that is humane, considerate, non-discriminatory and is in the best interests of the child.
- f) **“Child Abuse”** may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.
- g) **“Child Sensitive Environment”** is one where the ambience of a place makes a child feel comfortable, be herself/himself without inhibition, and is non-threatening.

### 1.5. Scope of the Child Protection Policy

IIHMR child policy will apply to all Stakeholders, Partners, Staff, Students and Interns other Personnel of Institution, who come in direct or indirect contact with children. The scope of this policy covers the responsibility of IIHMR to ensure safety and protection of all children in all situations and contexts

#### *In the field*

Staff, Interns, Consultants, Volunteers will respect the local cultural context and behave in appropriate with children in communities and also respect and uphold personal safety of all children.

#### *In the campus*

Personnel including staff both regular, temporary, hired services, students, volunteers, interns and consultants associated with IIHMR, will establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanour. This includes building protection environment, listening to children and showing respect to them in all spheres of IIHMR'S activities.

### **Funding agencies**

Funding agencies supporting research and demonstration programs of IIHMR that identifies the best means of achieving 'rights of children' and leverage funds that focus on the prevention of maltreatment and child abuse .

### **Visitors**

Visitors are bound by the policy of the Institute and guided in developing appropriate relationships with the children involved in activities or programs delivered by IIHMR and to refrain from abusive actions that may violate their protection.

## **2. Guiding Principles of Child Protection**

*Taking the cues from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ratified by GOI (2007) and Karnataka State Child Protection Policy shall be the guiding principle for implementing basic rights for all children below the age of 18 years. The Institute will respect the legal bindings which will protect rights of all children throughout in the project implementation area and take necessary steps to ensure their safety, including raising awareness for meeting their physical, psychological and social needs.*

*2.1 Sensitize, promote regular awareness on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including their right to protection, to the IIHMR faculty members, Staff, Consultants, Interns, Students and Volunteers associated with the Institute and the communities in which it works, including children and the general public.*

*2.2. Enhance capacities of staff working with children in projects, to effectively deal with issues of child rights and advocacy, to promote rights of children and to provide protection from exploitation, neglect and abuse*

*2.3 Equip the staff on all aspects of Children in need of Care & Protection, by orienting them on Juvenile Justice System ACT and the institution under the JJS ACT, including all existing institutional mechanism.*

*2.4. IIHMR will ascertain/ensure that personnel exercise behaviour protocols are followed consistently, in the context of their language, actions, dress, culture and behaviour.*

*2.5. The project implementing team, including staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and visitors will not indulge in any of the activity that may be abusive of any kind, that violates the rights of the children.*

*2.6 Any incident of child abuse in IIHMR supported programmes directly implemented or implemented in partnership with other stakeholders in the target community shall be reported and managed with the help of concerned child in need of care & protection, institution, committees, in the jurisdiction.*

*2.7. If the violator or perpetrator (abuser) is a staff of IIHMR, it will be reported to the Child Protection Point Person and the Director at the National Office by the Programme Manager for*

necessary action. Consequently, a due process enquiry shall be held to ascertain the facts in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

2.8. In case children are involved as stakeholders in any of the IIHMR program, Principles of Best Interest of the Child will be a primary consideration while making any decision concerning the child.

### **3. IIHMR and Other's Responsibilities**

i) Ensure that IIHMR shall constitute a committee (consisting of three faculty) which will adhere to the mandates of Karnataka State Child Protection Policy and adopt the guiding principles in all its spheres of its activities. The Director of the Institute is the advisor.

ii) IIHMR commits to work in tandem with the other existing structures like JJB, CWC in the project implementation area for protection of all children in the community and refer any case on child abuse to the designated committee/body.

iii) IIHMR ensures that its employees respect and uphold the personal safety of all children by ensuring the Principle of Equality, Universality and Non-discrimination

iv) The Institute and Staff will not employ children in all its sphere of its activities and as domestic workers in their homes.

v) Wherever necessary, IIHMR will ensure a written agreement with partner organizations to include a clause referring to child protection and the expectation that the partner organization will have a child protection policy of its own or agree that its staff will abide by IIHMR child protection behaviour protocols.

vi) Keeping the best interest of the child, the Institute will maintain confidentiality and privacy, as also refrain from disclosing any information about the children or the children's home where project/program.