



BRAC USA Safeguarding Policy

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Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe how BRAC's Safeguarding Policy applies to BRAC USA. This policy is intended to provide guidelines and general descriptions only; it is not the final word in all cases. Individual circumstances may call for individual attention.

BRAC (BRAC, BRAC International, BRAC University, BRAC and BRAC International's Enterprises) has committed to safeguarding its people and the communities it serves against abuse¹ across all its offices, programs and enterprises. This commitment to safeguarding is articulated through BRAC's values, codes of conduct and work instructions and incorporated into the design of programs and enterprises.

BRAC recognizes that some of its people are more at risk and has articulated categories of staff and program participants for whom risks may be greater: children, adolescents, people with disabilities and women.

Within the United States, BRAC USA also needs to ensure that it is meeting employment legislation requirements that pertain to safeguarding as well as legislative requirements for safeguarding staff, children and adults at risk. Nothing in this Safeguarding Policy or in any other document or policy is intended to violate any local, state, federal or international law.

BRAC USA has developed a separate Child and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy to provide more details on how it will safeguard these particular groups. Further details on how BRAC USA safeguards staff are outlined in BRAC USA's employment handbook.

Section 2: Safeguarding Principles

BRAC and BRAC USA holds the following principles with regard to safeguarding:

- Organizations have a safeguarding duty of care to participants, staff and volunteers, including where down-stream partners are part of delivery. This duty of care extends to people at risk of abuse within the communities the organizations serve.
- Organizations have a duty to identify groups of people among employees and participants that are at greater risk of becoming victims of abuse. They have a duty to try to mitigate the extra risks those groups face.
- Organizations have a duty to try to prevent abuse occurring. They must make safeguarding a central element of the organizational culture. They must mitigate existing risks that may already exist in the program design and specific work practices. They must establish secondary safeguarding mechanisms wherever risks cannot be mitigated through design.
- Organizations have a duty to make sure that, if abuse does occur, survivors/victims and witnesses have access to multiple safe reporting channels. Organizations have a duty to follow up on reports of abuse, to investigate them and to make sure that, if warranted, appropriate disciplinary action is taken. Organizations have a duty to protect

¹ Sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, intimidation and violence, neglect and exploitation

whistleblowers.

- Organizations have, in principle, a duty whenever abuse crosses the line into criminal behavior to involve local authorities. However, the dangers in terms of lack of due process and disproportionate punishment should be taken into account.
- Organizations have a duty to anchor safeguarding within management. Responsibilities with regard to safeguarding should extend to the highest levels of management and to the Boards. Those responsibilities should be clearly assigned. Organizations have a duty to make sure that the execution of safeguarding policies is carried out by competent professionals according to the highest standards and, whenever possible, following global best practices.
- Everybody within an organization is responsible for safeguarding employees, participants and community members. Everybody should intervene to stop abuse whenever possible. Everybody should report abuse.

Section 3: Standards of Behavior

BRAC standards of behavior are described within [BRAC's Code of Conduct](#), which accompanies this policy. These standards of behavior are the minimum requirements for:

- All staff contracted by BRAC USA.
- Associated personnel while engaged with work or visits related to BRAC USA, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; program visitors, including donors, journalists, celebrities and politicians.

Further details on BRAC USA's general standards of conduct are outlined in BRAC USA's employment handbook.

Section 4: Prevention

4.1 Safe Design of Programs and Enterprises

BRAC is committed to incorporating safeguarding into the design of programs and enterprises and their work processes. BRAC USA will ensure the following:

- Where BRAC USA is leading on the design of programs, we will ensure that we adopt appropriate risk assessment and mitigation processes, and support BRAC staff who are responsible for designing and delivering the program to apply safeguards throughout the program delivery including monitoring and evaluation.
- Where BRAC USA is securing funding for programs, we will ensure we have undertaken relevant due diligence on the program proposal for safeguarding and secured funding which enables the program to be delivered as safely as possible.

4.2 Recruitment and Selection

BRAC USA has incorporated safeguards into BRAC USA's recruitment process, from designing the job description to formal engagement of the employee. In summary, the following are considered when planning recruitment:

- Job descriptions for all positions make reference to responsibilities for safeguarding and/or the Code of Conduct and include the beliefs and values of the organization.
- Advertisement - makes clear the organization's commitment to safeguarding.
- Shortlisting - obtains and scrutinizes information in applications/CVs - resolves any gaps, discrepancies or anomalies in employment history.
- Interviews - includes questions around safeguarding, the Code of Conduct and working with children and adults, when applicable.
- When applicable, BRAC USA may require shortlisted candidates to sign a self-disclosure form confirming they have not been involved in any crime, illegal act, sexual harassment, or child abuse case previously, in compliance with applicable federal and state laws.
- Reference checks - verifies the successful applicant's identity, their employment history, and qualifications. Offers are not confirmed until all checks have been completed.

BRAC USA will ensure that its recruitment and selection process is in compliance with applicable local, state, federal and/or international laws. The above protocols will be followed unless prohibited by local, state, federal and/or international laws.

4.3 Education and Training

BRAC USA includes safeguarding in the education and training of its staff.

- Every new hire receives a brief introduction to the vision, mission and values of BRAC and BRAC USA, the Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding policy and duly acknowledge all of these as part of their induction.
- Aspects of safeguarding that are relevant to specific work processes are always part of the professional training of all staff and that, where needed, this training is generally repeated annually.
- Professionals who handle cases and complaints have competencies in line with the highest standards and the best practices.
- Campaigns to create awareness about safeguarding, where relevant, are undertaken at appropriate intervals or through different methodologies.

4.4 Communications

BRAC USA prohibits any use of its computer systems and networks in violation of any applicable law or BRAC USA policy, including those covering safeguarding, equal opportunities, racial and sexual harassment, discrimination, confidentiality, copyright and proprietary rights, publications, bullying, data protection and privacy; and/or any use that may potentially cause any damage, PR risk, legal or other liabilities to BRAC USA or its people.

4.5 Risk Analysis

BRAC USA will conduct risk analyses on systems and processes, programs and activities to ensure that actual or potential risks for staff, children and communities are understood and mitigated. Key or significant risks will be included in a risk register for senior management and the Board of Directors so that these can be monitored and addressed as necessary.

4.6 Line Management and Prevention

Line managers have direct responsibility for preventing abuse. They are responsible for creating an atmosphere of openness and accountability within their teams that makes it possible for witnesses and survivors/victims to come forward. The Director of Human Resources and Administration will serve as the BRAC USA Safeguarding Focal Point and is responsible for ensuring that risk analyses are conducted. They are responsible for ensuring that employees are familiar with the ethos of BRAC, BRAC USA and with the general and relevant specific safeguarding policies.

4.7 Safe Partnering

BRAC ensures that appropriate safeguards are applied to partner organizations (suppliers, vendors, downstream partners, consultants, etc.).

- Wherever BRAC is working with, funding, or supporting other partner organizations, the provisions of both BRAC's policy and BRAC USA's policy are reflected in the partnership arrangements.
- Partners should have their own safeguarding policy that broadly follows the provisions of this policy or should adopt the BRAC policy.
- BRAC USA or relevant BRAC offices should be satisfied that the practice and management arrangements of its partners reflect this common commitment to safeguarding.
- Cases of abuse within a partner organization receiving funding from BRAC USA will need to be reported to the relevant BRAC office and to BRAC USA. The local BRAC office, with BRAC USA support, will ensure the case is followed up in an adequate manner.
- Reporting requirements will be reflected in reporting protocols within the partnership arrangements.
- Breaches of safeguarding requirements may result in the termination of the partnership arrangement.

4.8 Visits to BRAC Offices

This policy will still apply in the event that BRAC USA staff or associates visit another BRAC office or program.

Staff will also be expected to follow any additional restrictions on conduct specific to that location, for example, cultural or safety requirements. Staff are expected to make themselves aware of guidelines and expectations relating to conduct when visiting a member country.

BRAC USA staff who breach the policy and/or code of conduct while visiting another BRAC office will be subject to actions that need to be taken through this policy as well as any safeguarding actions at the local BRAC office, e.g. perpetrating an abuse that is a criminal offense in a given country will need to be reported at local level as well as in the United States².

If staff have any questions about the policies or requirements of another BRAC office or program, they should contact BRAC USA's Chief Operating Officer or the Human Resources Director.

Section 5: Reporting and Investigation Process

5.1 Reporting

BRAC has created a reporting system for abuse (and other violations) with several channels that complement each other. The first channel for reporting suspected or actual abuse is line management. Line managers have to report all cases upward through the line and report to the country Safeguarding Focal Point. The second channel is to report directly to the designated helplines.

BRAC USA staff are obliged to report suspected or actual abuse by BRAC USA colleagues. The first channel for reporting is to their line manager, the Safeguarding Focal Point/Director of Human Resources and/or the Chief Operating Officer or their manager. Reports can be made either verbally or in writing. If a report is made verbally, we encourage that the staff member follow up with a written report. When raising concerns, we ask that staff provide as much detailed information as possible, including the background and history of the concern, names, dates and places where possible, and the reasons why the situation is cause for concern.

Victims/survivors of abuse by BRAC USA colleagues are not obliged to report but are encouraged to do so, so that BRAC USA can safeguard them and ensure the abuse is not repeated.

The second channel for reporting is when BRAC USA staff are traveling overseas and observing or receiving disclosures of suspected or actual abuse concerning a BRAC office. They should report that, in the first instance, to the BRAC USA Safeguarding Focal Point and the national Safeguarding Focal Point so that an appropriate follow up can be made. BRAC USA's Safeguarding Focal Point will also provide details of the report to the BRAC safeguarding team.

If a complaint or concern does not relate to BRAC staff or associated personnel but to a third party, BRAC USA will raise it with the relevant BRAC office to take forward as they see fit, for example by making a police report. BRAC USA will not take follow up actions since we have no contractual or employment relationship with third parties and have no jurisdiction to take action against them.

² This pertains to abuse as defined in this policy. There may be activities which are criminalized in particular countries but which BRAC would not define as abuse. BRAC USA staff are advised to discuss any potential issues that might arise during visits to countries where activities are criminalized with the Safeguarding Focal Point prior to the visit. The Safeguarding Focal Point can discuss with the staff how best to protect themselves during that visit.

Information on reports will be made to the BRAC USA Board and to BRAC. The Board and BRAC will receive regular updates on progress in investigating such reports. Safeguarding incidents will be reported promptly to donors as required under funding agreements.

The third channel for reporting includes any of the reporting contacts in the first channel of reporting, as well as the BRAC USA Audit Committee. BRAC USA and BRAC commit to ensuring that people that report abuse and other violations do not suffer any negative repercussions. BRAC USA and BRAC protect complainants and whistleblowers. In cases where reports are not upheld but were made in good faith, no further action is taken with those involved in the report, or those making it. In cases where the report is clearly made maliciously, the person making that report will be subject to disciplinary action.

5.2 Response

If a complaint involves BRAC USA Staff or associated personnel, BRAC USA is committed to reviewing all reported concerns, conducting proper, fair and thorough investigations tailored to the circumstances, and taking appropriate remedial and concluding steps as warranted. Any urgent attention required should be provided to parties involved in an incident (e.g. where a child or adult has been harmed) such as medical attention or immediate protection from further harm.

The Safeguarding Focal Point will take responsibility and have oversight of the case. The Chief Operating Officer of BRAC USA will decide on the immediate steps required to address the concern and decide on the nature of the safeguarding concern, its seriousness, the need to inform/involve others (including informing donors), the next steps, etc.

All action taken by BRAC USA in response to a concern will necessarily depend on the nature and severity of the concern. This may include initial inquiries and fact-gathering to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, the form and scope of the investigation. Note that an investigation into concerns raised is not an indication that they have either been confirmed or rejected.

BRAC USA complies with the law in conducting investigations. Staff are expected to provide truthful information when participating in an investigation and during the investigation, to keep matters related to the investigation confidential.

BRAC USA is committed to adopting a survivor-centered approach. BRAC USA provides adequate protection and other support to survivors, witnesses and complainants/whistleblowers, and alleged perpetrators (as part of their duty of care for personnel) throughout the investigation process as needed. BRAC USA will engage in a cooperative dialogue with survivors and others to determine adequate support.

5.3 Follow up on Complaint Outcomes

Once the investigation is completed and a determination is made, the complaining party will be advised that the investigation has been completed and may be informed of the resolution. The

individual about whom the complaint was made will be informed of the outcome. If it is determined that the complaint is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary actions against the perpetrator that correspond to the severity of the offense committed, ranging from a written reprimand to dismissal will be taken.

Based on the outcomes of this process, the matter may require no further action, may require further investigation, or may be referred externally as it appears to be a criminal case.

The case may be reported to relevant local law enforcement authorities, including the police and/or judicial authorities, and, if the case concerns a child, relevant child protection institutions, as needed and where considered appropriate by the organization and when possible, the survivor.

BRAC USA will also learn from the survivor what changes might be needed to either prevent something similar taking place in future, or to strengthen response and support provided.

5.4 Confidentiality

When a staff member raises a concern, BRAC USA will fully maintain confidentiality possible, consistent with applicable legal requirements and the need to conduct an adequate investigation or review.

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only and should be kept secure at all times.

5.5 Learning

BRAC USA commits to learning on safeguarding. The learning will be informed by experiences in implementing safeguards in organizational systems and processes, and through individual cases that may arise. Senior management and the Board will regularly discuss issues that are arising, the learning around these issues and changes that might be required in the organization.

5.6 Governance

The BRAC USA Chief Operating Office has oversight and specific responsibilities for safeguarding measures, issues and concerns that arise from BRAC USA staff, programs or operations. Issues relating to safeguarding and integrity are discussed regularly at Board meetings.

The BRAC USA Board of Directors will have safeguarding as a standing agenda item at all meetings. The Board will ensure that all members understand their duties and responsibilities for safeguarding and are able to carry them out. The Board will review and monitor the risk register, which includes key safeguarding risks.

Section 6: Conclusion

6.1 Review of Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and/or when there are any changes made to the BRAC Safeguarding Policy upon which this is based.