

MSH UK, Nepal and Peru ('MSH')

Child Protection Policy

Updated – 9 February 2015

In this document the term 'children' is used to refer to those individuals under 18 years of age as recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.' (pp. 13-17, *Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, Geneva, 29-31 March 1999, World Health Organization, Social Change and Mental Health, Violence and Injury Prevention*)

Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of our children are of paramount importance to all the adults working in MSH. The children have the right to protection, regardless age, gender, race, culture or disability. We will endeavour to enlist the support of parents, carers and the community to safeguard the well being of the children.

In our organisation we respect our children. The atmosphere within MSH is one that encourages all children to do their best.

Aims and Objectives

This policy ensures that all staff and volunteers at MSH are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. Its aims are:

- To raise the awareness of all staff/volunteers and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To ensure effective communication between all staff/volunteers when dealing with child protection issues.
- To lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.
- To provide guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children and adults, staff and volunteers towards children.

Procedures

- Project Directors in Nepal and Peru are the named Child Protection Coordinators.

- If any member of staff/volunteer suspects that a child may be a victim of abuse, they immediately inform the named person about their concerns.
- At all stages of the process, information will be kept confidential and only shared with necessary individuals or agencies.
- We require all adults who are employed or volunteering to complete a self-declaration about previous convictions and are subject to safeguarding checks.

Codes of Practice and Behaviour

- It is the organisation's intention that children should experience a safe nurturing atmosphere whilst receiving support from MSH.
- Physical intervention by adults is only acceptable when a child is at risk of harming themselves or another child/adult. The Director requires that the adult involved in any such incident to report this to him/her immediately, and to record it in the incident book in the child protection file which is located in the MSH Country Office.
- Staff and volunteers are encouraged to work in a way that does not make them vulnerable. Staff and volunteers are advised to work in conjunction with each other at all times and follow 'the rule of twos', ie two people should be present at all times when dealing with children.

Communication Systems

- A copy of the Child Protection Policy in both English, Spanish and Nepali (where appropriate) will held in the child protection file.
- The child protection file will contain local contact details for relevant agencies.
- All staff/volunteers will receive an induction before they commence working which will include a section on child protection. They will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and will have an opportunity to ask questions about expected practice.
- All staff/volunteers in MSH will receive regular feedback from the children.
- Protection Coordinator to raise their awareness of child protection procedures and to have an opportunity to comment on how the procedure works. This will be done on a monthly basis in the Team Meeting.