

COMMUNITY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION

Child Protection Policies & Guidelines

I PURPOSE

CRMF recognizes that it has a duty of care towards protecting children engaged within its programs and activities, therefore commits to creating and maintaining positive environments that protect children from all forms of exploitation and abuse. The CRMF Child Protection policy is intended to establish standards, practice and responsibility to protect children from exploitation and abuse.

2 SCOPE

Applies to:

- All CRMF staff (global and national)
- All consultants, Board of Trustees, volunteers, interns and project partners or organizations subcontracted by CRMF

3 POLICY STATEMENT

CRMF representatives must work proactively to protect children from all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, discrimination and exploitation. CRMF representatives, which includes all staff, consultants, Board of Trustees, interns, volunteers and partners or organizations subcontracted by CRMF are expected to work with integrity while executing their responsibilities and are prohibited from engaging in exploitation, sexual activity and abuse with children. CRMF representatives are prohibited from exchange of money, employment,

goods or services for sex, including sexual favors, harassment, and all other forms of child exploitation.

CRMF representatives are prohibited from any form of humiliating, degrading, aggressive or exploitative behavior towards children. Any engagement in such activity with children constitutes a violation of the CRMF Child Protection policy.

4 POLICY DETAILS

Guiding Principles

- **Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse:** CRMF does not tolerate child exploitation and abuse. CRMF will not knowingly engage – directly or indirectly – anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children.
- **Care for the vulnerable:** to ensure that all children have the opportunity of protection from abuse regardless of their gender, ability, race, ethnicity, circumstances or age, CRMF representatives, which includes all staff, consultants, Board of Trustees, interns, volunteers and partners or organizations subcontracted by CRMF will demonstrate care for the most vulnerable and marginalized. Vulnerable children will require particular attention in order to assure their safety needs.
- **Taking responsibility:** CRMF representatives are committed to a shared responsibility for the protection of the child.
- **Risk management approach:** While it is not possible to eliminate all risks of child exploitation and abuse, careful management can reduce the risks to children that may be associated with CRMF programs. These should be identified by thorough risk assessments prior to initiating programs.
- **Rights of the Child:** CRMF recognizes that there are many different ways of thinking and taking care of children and making sure they are protected. As an international organization, however, we endorse the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child general principle that all the rights guaranteed by it must be available to all children without discrimination; and article 19 which affords equal rights to protection for children from abuse.

- Criticality of reporting suspected allegations: CRMF representatives will report any concern or suspicion of exploitation and abuse of children.
- Confidentiality: Information regarding allegations of child abuse will only be shared and handled on a need to know basis, that is, only individuals who have legitimate reasons to access the information will be informed.

Behavior Protocols

- CRMF representatives should maintain an appropriate relationship with all children and families with whom we partner and work. Sexual contact with children is explicitly prohibited.
- CRMF representatives should not place themselves in compromising or vulnerable positions and should know that even if a child behaves inappropriately, the representative (as the adult) is always the responsible party.
- CRMF representatives should always be visible when working in proximity with children and, wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present.
- CRMF representatives should exercise sensitivity to local customs relative to appropriate conversation and physical contact with children. Never touch a child inappropriately or in a culturally insensitive manner.
- CRMF prohibits the hiring of children in executing CRMF projects and programs.
- CRMF representatives must observe all guidelines set out in the CRMF Photography and Video Handbook relative to photographing or filming a child.
- CRMF representatives should immediately report any suspicions of policy violations or inappropriate behavior towards children to the direct supervisor or HR contact person. If a CRMF representative knowingly chooses not to report an incident, then she/he may have their contract terminated and/or be removed from any association with CRMF

5 REPORTING PROCEDURES

Reporting Child Abuse

Any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse must be immediately reported to the relevant Manager. All

incidents must be reported and managed in accordance with the WorldFish Child Protection

Incident

Guidelines for reporting Child Abuse allegations:

- a) All allegations and concerns of abuse must be taken seriously, irrespective of the identity of the alleged perpetrator and victims, and regardless of how 'unbelievable' the situation may seem.
- b) All CRMF representatives must report any of the following situations:
 - any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected situations of abuse involving a child or children known to CRMF
 - any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected staff or representatives and/or criminal activity involving the abuse of a child or children whether or not they are known to CRMF.
- c) No staff member can agree to keep information regarding actual or suspected abuse 'private' as a personal confidence. Reports must be made, and decisions and actions taken, according to the Child Protection Incident Reporting Process. A written record of all child protection reports, including any decisions made, must be kept up to date and filed. This should include details of any referrals made to specialist agencies.
- d) All sensitive and personal data must be kept confidential (including the names of anyone who makes a report of abuse), and be shared on a strictly 'need to know basis'.
- e) Where it is suspected that a crime may have been committed, the names of those who are alleged to be a risk to children should be passed on to local law enforcement agencies for investigation in accordance with relevant legislation. This will normally be passed on by the most senior manager in the office to the local police agency.
- f) Where a CRMF representative is the subject of an investigation, an Internal Child Protection Investigation Panel will be convened by the Director Human Resources at HQ/HR, in consultation with regional and/or country manager. The composition of the panel depends on the nature of the allegation or concern but will routinely consist of a representative from Human Resources and a member of senior leadership.
- g) When a child protection investigation involving a staff member or representative concludes, decisions and actions must be taken in accordance with the Child Protection Incident Reporting Process.

h) If a report of abuse is made or concerns are raised, even if the situation is ultimately found to be untrue, no retaliatory action will be taken against the person making the report in line with the CRMF "Whistleblower Policy". If, however, the report is found to be malicious, Human Resources in consultation with senior leadership will decide on the course of action relating to disciplinary action.

i) Each regional and/or country office should maintain a Child Protection Briefing Note which includes information about specialized child welfare and law enforcement agencies and the appropriate mechanism under the national law for reporting concerns so that this information is readily on hand.

j) Any difficulties or confusion regarding how to apply the Child Protection Incident Reporting Process should be referred to your local HR representative or HQ/HR for further assistance and guidance.

CRMF will not knowingly permit any person to be employed or engaged as a consultant, intern or volunteer if the individual is known to be convicted for child abuse or a related offense.

Where permitted by local law and locally available, criminal background checks will be obtained for all new hires prior to finalizing a contract.

All CRMF employees are required to sign a Self-Declaration and Disclosure form; a screening measure taken to ensure that inappropriate people are not employed by CRMF

All CRMF representatives are required to sign acknowledgement of and acceptance of the Child Protection policy and agree to abide by the policy throughout their employment, tenure and/or association with CRMF

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

CRMF Representatives

- CRMF representatives are individually responsible for familiarization with and adherence to the CRMF Child Protection policy
- CRMF representatives must comply with the Child Protection reporting procedures, including but not limited to immediately reporting any suspected policy violations in accordance with the outlined reporting process (see Flowchart 1)

HQ Level CRMF HQ is responsible for creating this policy and disseminating it throughout all CRMF offices. It is the responsibility of CRMF HQ/HR to:

- Provide technical input/advice on the reporting and allegation management process
- Document policy violations preserving institutional memory in all cases.
- Assure that the Child Protection Code of Conduct is signed by all CRMF representatives

Field Level

The Country office is responsible to ensure that all CRMF staff and representatives have a copy of the Child Protection policy with a signed acknowledgement of policy on file locally with a copy to HQ/HR.

- Communicate on any violations of this policy to the CRMF Director of Human Resources and Director General.
- Assure that the Child Protection Code of Conduct is signed by all WorldFish representatives of the

Training

Each Country office is responsible to ensure:

- All staff receive training on Child Protection policy during onboarding.
- All staff acknowledge training received and understanding of policy by returning signed copy of CRMF Child Protection Code of Conduct to HR.
- Keep a signed copy of CRMF Child Protection Code of Conduct to HR in staff