



Child Safeguarding Policy

MOEI has been built on the fundamental belief that all children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, and all children have an equal right to protection regardless of any personal characteristic including age, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, ability, religious belief, or other aspects of their culture.

A culture of safety and accountability is essential for us to achieve our mission. The inherent power differential between aid organizations and impacted communities heighten the risk of abuse and exploitation of children. In acknowledgement of these vulnerabilities, we are committed to and accountable for creating and maintaining operational and programming environments that are safe for children.

At MOEI, we will not accept our representatives committing any acts of child abuse. Sexual activity with an individual under the age of 18 is identified as one of the forms of child abuse and is strictly prohibited. This is regardless of the legal age of consent within the state or country in which the child lives, and/or the location where the offense occurs. In locations where a child can legally give informed consent to sexual activity, such activity with or without their consent will be treated as a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action, including termination, and the pursuit of any other available legal remedy.

This policy applies to all persons working for MOEI or on our behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels, Board members, volunteers, consultants, interns, contractors, third-party representatives, suppliers, and business partners. Any violations of this policy will be treated as a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and any other available legal remedy. MOEI representatives must demonstrate the highest standards of behavior and conduct towards children, both in their private and professional lives, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

MOEI knows the importance of creating and maintaining a safe culture that is child-focused and community-driven through sustained and meaningful engagement with children, their families, communities, and MOEI representatives. MOEI recognizes that when special trust is exploited and standards for safeguarding children fail, immense damage is caused with long-term effects on the lives of children, their families, and communities, and undermine the credibility and reputation of our organization.

MOEI has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse by any of our representatives

DEFINITIONS

Child

- A child is defined as anyone under 18 years of age

Child Abuse

- Child abuse is anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.
- The main categories of Child Abuse are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect/Negligent Treatment, and Sexual Exploitation & Abuse

Child Safeguarding

- Child safeguarding is the act of making MOEI safe for children. It involves our collective and individual responsibility and preventative actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk of or actual harm by MOEI representatives. Safeguarding is carried out by developing and implementing a set of policies, procedures, and practices to ensure all organizational functioning prioritizes each child's safety

Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse involves doing harm to a child's emotional, intellectual, mental, or psychological development. This may occur as an isolated event or on an ongoing basis. Emotional abuse includes but is not limited to any humiliating or degrading treatment (e.g., bad name calling, threats, yelling/screaming/cursing, teasing, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming etc.); failure to meet a child's emotional needs; rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, isolating, or confining a child; and attacking or minimizing a child's cultural identity

Exploitation

- Exploitation is the actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power differential, or trust for the benefit of the individual leveraging their position, power, privilege, or wealth (through enticement, manipulation, coercion, or trickery) to engage a child in labor, domestic servitude, forced criminality, soldiering or organ harvesting, or in activity in which a child's dignity is compromised in order for an organization to gain financially or in reputation. Typically, the person(s) exploiting a child does so to profit monetarily, socially, or politically. It can happen to one or a group of children, in the community of origin, outside of the community, or internationally. The exploitation of a child may include but is not limited to:
 - domestic servitude (e.g., cleaning, childcare, cooking, etc.)
 - taking photos of children in distress or extreme states of malnourishment to gain donations.

- forced labor (commonly in factories or agriculture)
- forced criminal activities such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, manufacturing drugs, selling pirated merchandise.
- Using children for benefit fraud.
- Forcing a child to become a child soldier or join a gang.

Neglect

- Neglect includes but is not limited to failing to provide adequate food, shelter, or sufficient and seasonally appropriate clothing. Neglect is also failing to prevent harm; failing to ensure adequate supervision; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment or providing inappropriate medical treatment (e.g. administering medication when not authorized); or failing to provide a safe physical environment (e.g. exposure to violence, unsafe programming location, unsafe sleeping practices, releasing a child to an unauthorized adult, access to weapons or harmful objects, failing to child-proof a space that children will occupy etc.). It can also be MOEI staff, partners, contractors, suppliers, and sub-grantees failing to apply minimum requirements as set out in mandatory procedures (e.g., failing to protect a child's personal data).

Physical Abuse

- Physical abuse is the non-accidental use of physical force that deliberately or inadvertently causes a risk of/or actual injury to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing non-accidental physical harm to a child. Physical harm can also be caused when a caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness or temporary, permanent injury or disability of a child.

Representative

- Representatives include employees, volunteers, interns, consultants, Board members, Partners and others who work with children on MOEI's behalf, visit MOEI's programs, or who have access to sensitive information about children in MOEI's programs.

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Sexual Exploitation

- Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur with the use of technology. Within MOEI, child sexual abuse and exploitation also includes child early and forced marriage.

Zero Tolerance

- At MOEI, we have a culture of zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and mistreatment.
- This means that every single concern is fully responded to and where necessary prompt action including investigating and taking disciplinary action, if applicable) is taken.
- It means that we will hold all our representatives accountable for the same set of standards. Each representative is subjected to the same processes as everyone else regardless of their position or reputation within the organization.

KEY POLICY COMPONENTS

1. MOEI is Committed to Children

- MOEI is committed to conducting its programs and operations in a manner that is safe for the children it serves and to helping protect the children with whom MOEI is in contact.
- Representatives are explicitly prohibited from engaging in any activity that may result in any kind of Child Abuse.
- Representatives are expected to create and proactively maintain an environment that aims to prevent and deter any actions and omissions, whether deliberate or inadvertent, that place children at risk of any kind of Child Abuse.
- Any violations of this policy will be treated as a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including termination and any other available legal remedy.
- Representatives must at all times avoid actions that could be construed to constitute potentially abusive behavior; representatives must never place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.
- MOEI has adopted Procedures to promote training and prevention, reporting, and responding.

2. MOEI Complies with all Applicable Laws and Regulations

- It is MOEI's policy to ensure compliance with host country and local child welfare and protection legislation, or international standards, whichever affords greater protection.

Where the guidance in this policy conflicts with any applicable laws or regulations, the higher standard must be observed at all times.

3. MOEI Prohibits Sexual Activity with Children

- Any individual under the age of 18 is a child and is “underage,” regardless of the legal age of consent of the jurisdiction or country in which s/he lives and/or in which the offense occurs.
- Sexual activity with a child with or without their consent will be treated as a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination, and the pursuit of any other available legal remedy.

4. MOEI’s Management is Committed

- MOEI Management is committed to taking all appropriate corrective actions. Disciplinary, legal, or other applicable actions in response to any violation of the Child Safeguarding Policy will be taken against any individual who has committed a Child Safeguarding violation and/or anyone who knew of such a violation and failed to act or report.

5. Policy on Confidentiality in Child Safeguarding Matters

- MOEI will manage sensitive information in a manner that is respectful, professional, and that complies with the applicable law.
- Staff must keep all information about any suspected or reported incidents strictly confidential and must divulge only that information to the Legal team, Human Resources Lead and/or any other senior staff directly involved in the investigation, except as may be required by law.

SUMMARY OF KEY PROCEDURES

Prevention of Child Safeguarding Incidents

1. All partners must conduct Risk Assessments for all programming and activities involving children or those having a direct impact on children. All programs from design until exit will be evaluated to ensure it meets the standards for safeguarding children.
2. Where possible and practical, the “Two-Adult Rule,” wherein two or more adults supervise all activities where children are involved and are present at all times, shall be followed. Where not possible, staff will be required to proactively plan and implement steps to mitigate the risk of not having two adults present.
3. Representatives must never:
 - act in ways that may be abusive or place Children at risk of abuse,
 - hit, physically assault, or physically abuse Children or threaten to do so,
 - engage in behaviors that are physically inappropriate or sexually provocative.,
 - engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years irrespective of the age of majority/consent or local custom,

- stay alone overnight with one or more Children benefiting from MOEI programs who are not part of their family, whether in their house, project premises or elsewhere,
- have a Child who is engaged in programming or MOEI activity, who is not a part of their family, stay overnight at their home,
- sleep in the same bed as a Child engaged in MOEI programming/activity or sleep in the same room as the Child, who is not a part of the their family,
- exchange personal contact information or ask for Children’s personal information,
- develop relationships with Children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive,
- use language, make suggestions, or offer advice to Children which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- do things for participating Children of a personal nature that they can do themselves (e.g., toileting, dressing, feeding, washing, etc.),
- condone or participate in behavior of Children which is unsafe or illegal,
- act in ways that shame; humiliate; belittle; or degrade Children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse,
- discriminate against, show unfair preferential or differential treatment towards certain Children engaged in MOEI programming/activity to the exclusion of others,
- ask to meet Children away from other adults or spend excessive time alone with Child engaged in MOEI programming/activity away from others in a manner which could be interpreted as inappropriate; and/or
- expose Children to inappropriate images, films, music, and websites including mature content, indecent images (pornography) and violence.

AGREEMENTS WITH PARTNERS

Sub-awardees, partners, vendors, suppliers, consultants, and others with whom we provide assets in exchange for services or products (collectively, “Partners”)

- All agreements with Partners must include the requirements of this Policy, including a provision in which the Partner agrees to comply with this Policy (subject to the Exception Approval Procedure contained therein).
- Partners receiving funds from donors with relevant requirements must comply with those child safeguarding requirements.

GUESTS ON PROJECT VISITS

- All Representatives of MOEI on project visits involving children are subject to our Program Visit Child Protection Guidelines.
- As a condition to their visit, all Representatives visiting projects involving Children in MOEI programs are required to complete a background check and sign the Child Safeguarding Policy Acknowledgement.

- Once at the project, there will be a verbal briefing made to the guests regarding appropriate conduct.
- The use of personal cell phones or other personal recording devices must not be used in MOEI programming or operational spaces where children are present. Official MOEI or partner mobile devices or media equipment should be used for photography and/or filming. Consent forms signed by parents and caretakers which allow MOEI and their partners to acquire images, film, artwork and stories from/about children will be strictly limited to business use.
- Social Media: All photography, videography, artwork and/or stories are subject to the Communications Guidelines that serve to ensure a child's safety and protect children's dignity.

OUR APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING

Training and Prevention

- MOEI provides training on the Child Safeguarding Policy and will require appropriate training for certain Representatives.
- All representatives are required to complete and pass a background check before visiting or assuming work on behalf of MOEI
- Visitors will be accompanied by MOEI staff at all times.

Reporting Child Safeguarding Incidents

- If a child is in danger or in harm's way, call the local authorities immediately.
- All other concerns must be reported within 24 hours through the appropriate channel within 24 hours.
- "Mandated Reporters" must report child welfare concerns to the appropriate local authority

Responding to Child Safeguarding Incidents

- MOEI takes every allegation of a violation of our Child Safeguarding Policy seriously. The Child Safeguarding Lead is responsible to ensure all credible allegations are logged and tracked in the MOEI central database.
- Representatives covered by this policy, even if the governing policy is their own Child Safeguarding Policy, must cooperate fully with any investigation or inquiry by MOEI and preserve all records relating to any alleged violation of this Child Safeguarding Policy.