

Child Protection Policy

The goal of this policy is: To protect children from exploitation and abuse of all kinds in the delivery of AMAF's aid program.

Objective: To create and maintain protective environments for children in the delivery of AMAF's aid program.

1. Scope

This policy applies to:

- AMAF members
- All contractor and civil society organisations funded by AMAF, including:
 - individual contractors
 - partners or organisations subcontracted by AMAF-funded contractors or civil society organisations
 - personnel of AMAF-funded contractors and civil society organisations
 - Australian Volunteers for International Development Program participants and partners

2 Guiding principles

The policy is guided by the following principles: Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse AMAF does not tolerate child exploitation and abuse. Such action attracts criminal, civil and disciplinary sanctions. AMAF works to reduce the risks of child exploitation and abuse associated with delivering aid activities and trains its staff on their obligations. AMAF will not knowingly engage—directly or indirectly—anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children. AMAF will not fund any individual or organisation that does not meet AMAF's child protection compliance standards in their operations and activities.

Recognition of the best interest of the child Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and AMAF is committed to upholding the rights and obligations under this convention. AMAF recognises that some children, such as those with disability and children living in areas impacted by disasters are particularly vulnerable.

Sharing responsibility for child protection To effectively manage risks to children, AMAF requires the commitment, support and cooperation of contractors and civil society organisations. They must meet the terms of this policy and will be held accountable, through contracts, audits and spot checks, for complying with it. 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 aid activities. These

are identified during initial risk assessments and are managed for the duration of the aid activity.

Procedural fairness AMAF uses fair and proper procedures when making decisions that affect a person's rights or interests. Our partners are expected to adhere to this principle when responding to concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse.

3. Implementation within AMAF

Ensuring coordinated policy implementation AMAF's Child Protection Compliance Section is responsible for:

- responding to reports of child exploitation and abuse, and policy non-compliance
- conducting child protection audits and spot checks to monitor the child protection systems of contractors and civil society organisations
- monitoring internal and external compliance with the policy
- providing child protection training for AMAF volunteers

Increasing staff awareness of child protection obligations under the policy

- AMAF volunteers must:
 - immediately report any concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse, and policy non-compliance, by anyone covered by the policy
 - consider child protection as part of the initial risk assessment for aid activities and throughout the aid management cycle.

Internal recruitment and screening processes

AMAF's internal recruitment processes include stringent screening measures to ensure that inappropriate people are not employed by the agency. These include criminal record checks and background checks on all successful candidates before they begin work.

Internal procedures for handling reports related to child exploitation and abuse AMAF will develop internal procedures for handling reports related to child exploitation and abuse and notifies relevant law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

Ensuring risks to children are managed in humanitarian disaster responses AMAF recognises that children living in areas impacted by disasters are particularly vulnerable. All organisations implementing AMAF's humanitarian disaster response activities must comply with the policy's child protection compliance standards. Risks to children must always be considered when developing humanitarian disaster response activities.

Child Protection Code of Conduct All AMAF volunteer staff must comply with AMAF's Child Protection Code of Conduct which sets stringent standards for personal behaviour. AMAF volunteers are expected to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child exploitation and abuse in the course of their association with AMAF.

Communication of Child Safeguarding All AMAF members and volunteers are regularly updated on this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. Volunteers and AMAF visitors to local projects are refreshed on the requirements before on the ground involvement.

4. AMAF's expectations of contractors and civil society organisations

Contractor and civil society organisations Contractor and civil society organisations play an important role in protecting children. AMAF-funded contractors and civil society organisations are required to develop and implement an AMAF-compliant child protection policy.

Individual contractors Individual contractors who are in contact with children are required to sign the funding organisation's child protection code of conduct and ensure they comply with this during their employment. Individual contractors must obtain a criminal record check before they are contracted.

5. Child Abuse reporting process

AMAF considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. We will take all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and act on these reports immediately. It is mandatory for all AMAF staff and others to report concerns or allegations of child abuse. These concerns may relate to child or a staff member involved in the organisation or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the organisation's programs. If you do have a concern you should immediately follow AMAF's child abuse reporting procedures.

Who should report?

All AMAF staff and partners including people in the community and partner organisations.

What should be reported?

- a. Any disclosure or allegation from a child/community member or staff regarding the safety/abuse exploitation of child
- b. Any observation or concern and behaviour exhibited by an AMAF staff volunteer or relevant stakeholder that breaches AMAF code of conduct for working with children
- c. Inappropriate use of the organisation's photographic equipment or computers including evidence of child pornography

d. Start engaging in suspicious behaviour that could be associated with sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Who to report to?

a. Overseas: child-abuse reports should be made to the line manager country director. If this is possible reports can be made directly to the Australian-based child protection officer.

b. In Australia: child-abuse reports should be made to the President of AMAF. Reporting child abuse can either be made in the State police with the State child protection authorities. If there is an allegation or suspicion of child sexual abuse by a staff member or volunteer in the organisation, these matters will be reported to the State police. If there are concerns that a child is being sexually abused by some external to the organisation AMAF will contact the State police and/or child protection

c. Concerns about the welfare of the child in relation to neglect and/or emotional abuse will be reported to the child protection authorities in each state or territory.

d. Concerns about people engaging in child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography will be reported to the Australian Federal police.

Reporting of child abuse allegations overseas Child-abuse reports should be made to the line manager country director. If this is not possible reports can be made directly to the Australian-based child protection officer. An initial assessment will be made based on the quality and reliability of the information and a decision will be made in consultation with the President of AMAF, on what steps to take.

A local reporting procedure will guide the process based on whether the allegation constitutes a criminal offence in the country or whether it is a breach of the AMAF code of conduct and will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

The first step will be to gather all the relevant information and address any health and protection needs of the child. The matter may be directly referred to the local police and or authorities if the allegations are considered to be criminal offences. If the incident has occurred outside of the program the matter will be referred to an external body or agency dealing with child protection matters in that country.

When to report? Child-abuse concern should be raised immediately.

How should it be reported? Verbally and completing the AMAF child abuse incident reporting sheet.

What will happen next?

Child protection officer in consultation with the country director would discuss the allegations and decide upon the next step. This will involve either

- interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision
- report to local police and or child protection authority
- report made to the Australian Federal police – concern handled internally if it is not a criminal matter
- no further action taken

6. Procedures for dealing with suspected abuse by volunteers or AMAF-funded contractors

a. When dealing with issues concerning abuse by an adult in a position of trust, AMAF volunteers must remember that the welfare of the children participating in the program is paramount, but that we also have a responsibility to ensure that our staff and volunteers are treated fairly and with respect. This procedure is designed to meet both those objectives. The Board of Directors will ensure that every volunteer is fully aware of these procedures.

b. All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. AMAF would ensure that the interest of any one reporting child abuse in good faith is protected. Any employee or intentionally makes false and malicious allegations will face disciplinary action.

c. Children and community members with whom AMAF works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about AMAF volunteers.

d. The first requirement of these procedures is for the complainant to report his or her concerns to the Named Child Protection Officer.

AMAF Named Senior Officer is

Dr. Pon Ketheswaran, Chairman of the Board of Directors

If this person is unavailable or is the subject of the allegation, then the alternative person to contact is:

Dr. V. Mano Mohan, Director of the Board, AMAF

The contact details of the above Officers are listed in the AMAF website.

7. On receipt of a concern when an individual may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved in a way that indicates s/he may not be suitable to work with children

The Named Senior Officer will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer, i.e. Department of Human services, who will consider, with the Named Senior

Officer, the most appropriate way forward. It is essential that nothing is done to investigate the concern before contacting the local authority as this can contaminate evidence if a police investigation is deemed appropriate.

8. If the concern does not meet the above criteria, but involves other inappropriate behaviour by the staff member / volunteer then this will be dealt with through the AMAF Disciplinary Procedure.

- a. It is also important to ensure that both the child and the alleged perpetrator receive appropriate support through this procedure. For the child this should in the first instance be provided by their parents / carers who may need some support to do this. The member / volunteer should be encouraged to get support from a union representative, friend, or another identified member of staff / volunteer.

Reviewing the child protection policy regularly This policy will be reviewed every three years, and lessons learnt will be incorporated into subsequent versions.

Download the Child Protection Code of Conduct form [here](#)

Last Amended March 2021

Approved by Board of Directors