



The Movement for Community-led Development-US

Safeguarding, Anti-Trafficking and Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Board, January 6, 2024

Statement

The Movement for Community-led Development (MCLD) US is committed to the human dignity of all people and thus does not tolerate any form of exploitation, abuse or harassment, whether verbal, physical or sexual in nature, anywhere in our organization or in our work.

As children are particularly vulnerable, The Movement for Community-led Development US (MCLD US) makes special provisions for their safety and well-being.

Scope

There are two groups in policy scope:

- MCLD US Affiliated Person is anyone officially affiliated with MCLD US: it refers to all full time and part time staff members, board members, national advisory committee members, volunteers and / or interns under direct supervision of staff, and any other person who is officially contracted to represent MCLD US. Affiliated Persons are expected to comply with the principles and requirements specified in this policy.
- MCLD US Associated Person is anyone not officially affiliated with MCLD US who may however be associated or perceived to be associated with MCLD US: it refers to community partners (including animators, catalysts and other volunteer community organizers), partner organizations, vendors, consultants, independent contractors and subcontractors, guests, or any other person who is perceived to be associated with MCLD US. Associated Persons are expected to act in accordance with the principles and requirements specified in this policy.

Key Terms

Safeguarding is the set of measures designed to prevent and address behavior by MCLD US Affiliated or Associated persons that threatens the safety, well-being or human rights of others.

Said behavior is unacceptable and is hereafter referred to as misconduct. Specific examples of such misconduct are detailed in Appendix 1.

A child is defined as a human being under the age of eighteen, even if local law in the country of incidence dictates that the age of majority is attained earlier. A specific code of conduct for interaction with children is detailed in Appendix 2.

"Trafficking in persons" means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, through means such as the threat or use of force or coercion; abduction; fraud; deception; abuse of power; abuse of a position of vulnerability; or giving or receiving of payments or benefits to

achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. The consent of a victim of trafficking is irrelevant where any of the means set forth above have been used. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation is considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth above. Specific details around unacceptable activities relating to trafficking are included in Appendix 3.

Local Compliance

We recognize that laws and requirements may differ among countries, and that approaches cannot be universal. In order to comply with any provision of national laws that go beyond MCLD US's policies, when needed, MCLD US may work with other National Associations to develop additional local policies to meet those local requirements. In no circumstances will the additional local policies serve to weaken or contradict the MCLD US policy. When this policy contravenes national laws, the respective country's policy will take precedence in alignment with the spirit of the MCLD US policy.

Accountability

MCLD US Board is responsible for monitoring and implementing the MCLD US policy.

A Safeguarding Officer is appointed in MCLD US, who is:

- Naturally skilled with handling sensitive issues and information.
- Trusted and respected by staff and community members.
- Trained in how to handle safeguarding and anti-trafficking reports appropriately. This includes bringing reports to responsible staff or law enforcement agencies.'
- The Safeguarding Officer is tasked with the following key responsibilities: Attend annual training of trainers on safeguarding arranged by MCLD US
- Brief new Affiliated Persons and conduct an annual local training on safeguarding and anti-trafficking.
- Promote ongoing awareness on the importance of safeguarding and anti-trafficking.
- Ensure that reporting mechanisms are in place, both in the workplace and in communities.
- Conduct the initial fact gathering regarding any issues reported.
- Coordinate with the Board about concerns and investigations.
- Conducting risk assessments and developing mitigation measures to address these risks with leadership.

Approach

This policy is organized by the five phases of Safeguarding and Anti-Trafficking:

- Prevention: Proactive efforts to keep misconduct from occurring in the first place.
- Reporting: Procedures for detecting and reporting incidents that do occur.
- Investigation: Steps involved in fully understanding the facts of a reported incident.
- Discipline: The unequivocal consequences of misconduct.
- Closure: Informing the complainant of MCLD US's determination in the matter.

Prevention

Policies

This policy comes under the umbrella of MCLD US's Code of Conduct which is a set of guiding standards and principles that all representatives of MCLD US adhere to in practice and in spirit in all their decisions, procedures, actions and interactions.

All MCLD US Affiliated Persons are required to familiarize with and attest to the Code of Conduct and its associated policies upon joining MCLD and annually thereafter. Associated Persons will be briefed about the Code of Conduct prior to interaction with MCLD US partners.

Dissemination

This policy will be made available on our website and in the policy handbook of MCLD US office. It will be provided to all Affiliated Persons as part of their orientation.

A link to the full policy will be provided to Associated Persons who interact with community-based organizations and communities through MCLD US.

Continuous Review

Every reported incident will trigger a review of the policy to determine if, and which, change in our policies and practices could avoid a repeat of the same situation. New policies, papers, training and recommendations from peer organizations or funders will be considered to improve the policy.

Applicable laws, statutes, regulations and codes, including the following, change from time to time: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNHRC);

UN Secretary General's Bulletin: Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;

US Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000;

USAID ADS 303 Mandatory Standard Provision, Trafficking in Persons (July 2015) and;

International Labor Standards on Child Labor and Forced Labor.

Major amendments in the above will also trigger a review of the policy.

The MCLD US Board will review this policy annually in consultation with the ED.

Advertisement

Recruiting materials, including advertisements, will refer to key policies including this safeguarding, and anti-trafficking policy.

Interview and References

Appropriate questions will be asked during the interview and reference check process to evaluate a candidate's commitment to safeguarding and anti-trafficking principles and to reduce the chance that prior offenders join MCLD US's team.

Positions Classified as Working with Children

MCLD US does not anticipate any of its Affiliated Persons to work directly with children. However if they are required to do so, a criminal background check of such persons that specifically checks for prior incidents of child-related misconduct of any kind will be conducted.

Interviews will incorporate behavioral based questions as an additional screening measure.

Training

Affiliated persons will undergo safeguarding, anti-trafficking and child protection policy training. In order to further foster a culture of transparency and respect in line with our Code of Conduct, the training will include a discussion on where the boundaries between normal and unwanted behavior lie. Any change in policy will be accompanied by appropriate training as necessary.

Reporting

It is mandatory for all MCLD US Affiliated Persons to immediately report any witnessed, suspected or alleged misconduct whether the incident occurred at the workplace or in a community. MCLD will seek to protect Affiliated and Associated Persons from adverse consequences of reporting incidents in good faith through a Whistleblower policy (to be approved).

Reporting an issue through the MCLD US system does not forbid any MCLD US Affiliated Persons to report the observed issue to the relevant authorities. Additionally, MCLD US may have to or decide to

report the issue to the authority, with or without the consent of the Affiliated Person, should it fall under obligation of the law of the country concerned.

There is a deeply entrenched culture of silence around exploitation, abuse and harassment. For that reason, it is incumbent upon MCLD US to create reporting mechanisms that make it easy and safe for victims and observers to report any such misconduct. This reporting mechanism, including contact information for the Safeguarding Officer as well as whistleblower hotline information (once it is created) will be widely made available to all MCLD US Affiliates, Associated Persons, and any CBOs and community members that interact with MCLD US Affiliated persons.

All alleged incidents must be reported by the Safeguarding Officer to the MCLD US Board promptly. The Safeguarding Officer will report annually to the Board on all reported incidents and their outcome. Serious incidents will be reported as quickly as practicable to the Chair of Board. If required, MCLD US will inform funders that an incident took place, and of its resolution.

Investigation

All suspected misconduct must be investigated in consultation with local law enforcement and/or expertise, as appropriate. This includes rumors as well as formal reports.

Investigator

If the incident happens in the US, MCLD US Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for the investigation. If the incident occurred in a MCLD National Association outside the US, the Safeguarding Officer or Country Coordinator for the National Association is responsible for the investigation, with support from the MCLD US Safeguarding Officer. If there is any allegation that the Safeguarding Officer or Country Coordinator is involved in the incident, the Executive Director of MCLD US is responsible for the investigation. If the Executive Director is alleged to be involved in the incident, then the matter will be referred to the Chair of the MCLD US Board.

Depending on the seriousness and complexity of the allegation, the investigation may be handled internally or referred to an outside expert, after consultation with the MCLD US Board.

All electronic records of investigations, internal or external, will be kept on file in the MCLD US records.

Process

The initial response to any allegation is to take the report seriously. Safeguarding Officers or others who receive a complaint must not perpetuate the culture of diminishment around these serious issues;

It is key to take all reasonable precautions to ensure protection of the alleged victim, including but not limited to removing the alleged victim and/or perpetrator from the situation, and offering access to professional psychological support;

The Investigator may review relevant documents including electronic communications and take steps to obtain and preserve those documents;

The Investigator may interview parties involved, including relevant witnesses;

The Investigator will write an Incident Report (available on MCLD US's Intranet at sites.google.com/a/MCLD.org) to document the investigation.

Confidentiality

MCLD US will maintain the confidentiality of the complainant, the accused, and any witnesses, and each of their statements and records, to the fullest extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances. MCLD US cannot promise absolute confidentiality but will conduct the investigation on a need-to-know basis.

Discipline

Disciplinary action will be taken against any MCLD US Affiliated or Associated Person found to have:

Engaged in conduct that has violated MCLD US policies;
Contributed to the creation or continuation of a hostile work environment;
Failed to report an exploitation, abuse or harassment concern;
Intentionally made a false allegation; or
Obstructed an internal investigation.

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to:

Termination of all relations including employment, contractual or partnership agreements; and
Reporting to authorities if it is suspected that a crime has been committed.

In addition to any disciplinary action taken by MCLD US, the MCLD Affiliated and Associated Persons may be held personally liable for monetary damages if a civil action is filed against him or her.

Closure

MCLD US will inform the complainant, if known, of its determination as to whether MCLD US policy was violated. However, MCLD US will generally not disclose the nature of any disciplinary action that may have been taken because discipline is a confidential matter between MCLD US and the individual subject to corrective action. Discipline may take many forms, and those who raise concerns should not assume that disciplinary measures have not been implemented simply because MCLD US does not publicize such measures.

Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling, or disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, termination, and/or pressing charges, as The Movement for Community-led Development US believes appropriate under the circumstances.

Appendix 1: Types of Misconduct

Unacceptable behavior under this policy may include, but is not limited to, the following types of misconduct:

- Abuse of Power: the nature of NGO work creates an inherently unequal power dynamic—between those employed by or working with the NGO (which has resources and status), and the members of the communities where we work (who frequently have fewer resources and/or status). Misuse of authority is the commission of an unlawful act, done in an official capacity, in the course of performing work.
- Child Abuse: verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of a person under 18 years of age or above if legally higher in a specific country.
- Gender-Based Violence: actions resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women and/or girls or otherwise based on gender or identity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
- Disability Abuse: physical, financial, sexual and/or psychological abuse toward a person with a disability.
- Elder Abuse: single, or repeated acts, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person
- Emotional Abuse: a behavior designed to hurt another person emotionally, which may include restriction of movement, or treatment that is degrading, isolating, ignoring, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), threatening, discriminating, ridiculing or hostile.

- Financial Abuse: when one person improperly restricts access to money from another. This type of abuse may include actions like cutting off appropriate access to bank accounts and preventing appropriate access to financial information.
- Physical Abuse: a non-accidental physical act or threat of a physical act designed to harm another person physically. This type of abuse may include actions like slapping, punching, assault or inappropriate physical contact, intimidating or hostile acts.
- Sexual Abuse: any unwanted sexual or threatening act forced on the victim. This form of abuse is also often known as sexual assault or rape. Sexual abuse can include anything from unwanted touching to forced intercourse or forced sexual contact with another person.
- Sexual Exploitation: an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose. It is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes.
- Sexual Harassment: unwelcome or inappropriate advances, requests for favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, as well as offensive remarks about a person's sex or gender.
- Spiritual Abuse: attack against another's belief system, denying access to a house of worship or forced participation in a cult.
- Transactional Sex: sexual relationships where the giving and/or receiving of gifts, material support, money or other services is an important factor.
- Verbal Abuse: use of words and body language with the intent to hurt another person. Verbal abuse may include put-downs, name-calling, insulting nicknames, derogatory statements, slurs, and unreasonable criticisms.
- Visual Abuse: non-verbal communication that hurts others' dignity, for example displaying sexually suggestive posters, derogatory cartoons or drawings, sending inappropriate adult-themed gifts, leering, or making sexual gestures.

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for Interaction with Children

Always show respect:

- Always treat all children with respect, regardless of their race, color, gender, language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation or other status).
- Never use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, provocative (sexually or not), demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Never abuse:
- Never engage in any sort of child abuse whether sexual, physical, emotional, neglect, grooming, harassment or exploitation via digital or other means
- Never engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to sexually exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium
- Never use physical or emotional punishment on children
- Never engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Never hire children for domestic or other labor, except if related to a school apprentice program and comply with labor laws as set out by the International Labor Organization.

Always supervise:

- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children

- Never sleep close to unsupervised children, unless absolutely necessary, and in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained; as much as possible, ensure that another adult is present when possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children)
- Never invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger, and do your utmost best to ensure the presence of another adult

Observe and disclose:

- Be aware of your and other people's behavior, and avoid actions or behavior that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse
- Disclose, as soon as realistically possible, all charges, convictions and other allegations brought against you for an offense that relates to child exploitation and abuse
- Report immediately, to a Country Coordinator, Manager, Safeguarding Officer, or the Board, any concerns or allegations that relate to any situation involving a MCLD Affiliate or Associate, where words, actions or behavior may be interpreted as a breach of this Child Protection Policy in accordance with appropriate procedures (as stated in the Safeguarding Policy).

Photographing or filming a child, or using children's images for work- related purposes:

- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be appropriately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

Appendix 3: Trafficking of Persons

Unacceptable activity under this policy may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- trafficking persons (see definition);
- procurement of a commercial sex act
- used forced labor
- acts that directly support or advance trafficking in persons which includes:
- destroying, concealing, confiscating, or otherwise denying access to an employee's identity or immigration data
- failing to provide transport or failing to pay for return transport from a country outside the country of hire to the country from which the employee was recruited upon the end of employment if requested by the employee unless the employee is a victim of human trafficking seeking services for legal redress in the country of employment or a witness in a human trafficking enforcement action
- soliciting a person for the purpose of employment, or offering employment, by means of materially false or fraudulent pretenses, representation or promises regarding the employment
- charging employees recruitment fees: or
- providing or arranging housing that fails to meet the host country housing and safety standards