



Child Protection Policy

Statement of Commitment to Children Change Colombia Child Protection Policy

To be signed by staff, trustees, relevant contractors, interns and volunteers.

Children Change Colombia's mission is *"to support, empower and protect children and young people that are survivors or are at risk of the most neglected issues in Colombia, by strengthening local grassroots to positively impact their communities and defend their rights in the long term."*

Children Change Colombia is committed to keeping children safe. We strive to be a 'child safe' and 'child friendly' organisation protecting children from accidental harm as well as all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

I _____, have read and understood the guidelines, procedures and ramifications of misconduct outlined in Children Change Colombia's Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practice while working with Children Change Colombia.

Declaration of Criminal Convictions

I declare that I have/have not* a prosecution pending, ever been convicted, bound over or cautioned by the police or received a formal reprimand or final warning for any offence.

If applicable, I will provide the Designated Safeguarding Officer at Children Change Colombia with details, including those prosecutions or convictions considered 'spent' and any previous investigations or allegations made against me.

Print name _____

Job title/role _____

Signature _____

Date _____

* delete as appropriate

About this Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, or anyone working on behalf of Children Change Colombia, or in a position to be publicly identified as a representative. Hereafter, 'staff' will refer to trustees, employees and volunteers.

Children Change Colombia believes that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, socio-economic status or beliefs. For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone below the age of 18 years old.

Risk Management

Children Change Colombia is committed to ensuring that child protection is part of our everyday practice and more than just signing a piece of paper. For this reason we carry out a child protection risk assessment at least once a year. A Risk Management chart is drawn up and staff, volunteers and project partners are involved in this process. Findings are incorporated into this policy and child protection practice. Thinking through the risks to our work and involving key stakeholders such as volunteers and partners helps to reveal the vulnerabilities in our work and indicates how we can best put child protection into practice.

Introduction

This Child Protection Policy (CPP) provides clear guidelines for Children Change Colombia's daily practice.

As part of this policy, we recognise that a concern might arise both because of poor organisational practice or because someone is putting a child at risk or harming them.

This document is to be reviewed and updated at least once every year or as necessary (to account for major changes at Children Change Colombia or in relevant legislation).

Duty of Care

Anyone working with children has a legal and moral duty of care to do all they can to protect them from harm, abuse and injury. Specifically this means:

- A duty to behave in a way that does not place children at risk of harm
- A duty to respond to concerns about specific children and ensure these are reported to the appropriate authorities who can act to protect them, as per the reporting process outlined below.

Guidelines and Procedures

1. Management Structure

Creating a 'child-safe' organisation depends on having clear structures and an open and aware culture in place to ensure that all staff, trustees, local partners, relevant contractors, interns and volunteers, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, feel confident and comfortable speaking out and implementing child protection safeguards. To ensure this:

Children Change Colombia management encourages open lines of communication, an atmosphere of support for reporting, and a positive environment for giving and receiving feedback.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers in the UK and in Colombia have responsibility for ensuring the CPP is implemented. This ensures that child protection is prioritised within Children Change Colombia and everyone is clear about the responsibilities of these roles.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection induction for new staff members and volunteers in the UK is the responsibility of their line manager, with support from the Designated Safeguarding Officer where required.

2. Role of Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) in UK and Colombia

The Designated Safeguarding Officer in the UK:

Is (normally) the first point of contact for queries and concerns about child protection issues in the UK (unless the concern involves the DSO – in which case queries should be raised directly with Children Change Colombia's Executive Director. For more information see Section 7, reporting protocol).

Ensures safeguarding procedures are carried out in UK Office recruitment processes (for more information see the Recruitment Policy).

The DSO is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and the CPP is updated and adhered to.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer in Colombia:

Is (normally) the first point of contact for queries and concerns about child protection issues in Colombia (unless the concern involves the DSO – in which case queries should be raised directly with Children Change Colombia's Executive Director. See Section 7, reporting protocol.)

Ensures safeguarding procedures are carried out in Colombia Office recruitment processes (for more information see the Recruitment Policy).

Carries out CPP induction for new staff members and volunteers in Colombia.

3. Recruitment

Our recruitment process aims to minimise the risk of recruiting anybody who may be a risk to children, including child abusers. Therefore all trustees and staff members and interns formally appointed undergo a thorough recruitment process:

- Advertisements for job vacancies (voluntary and paid) refer to our CPP and screening
- A copy of our CPP will be sent out with letters of job offer and reference to it will be made during the interview
- A minimum of 2 references (not family, more than 2 years relationship with candidate) must be obtained and are always taken up
- A signed commitment to the CPP is a condition of employment
- Read and sign a copy of our CPP.

A DBS check (or Colombian equivalent – *pasado judicial* (PJ)) is carried out on all trustees/staff/interns/volunteers appointed. The CRB check is repeated every three years in the UK by the Office Administrator. The PJ is repeated every year in Colombia by the individual members of staff. Children Change Colombia covers the expenses of all such checks.

4. Education and training

On induction all staff, trustees, relevant contractors, interns and volunteers, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, having direct or indirect contact with children, will be familiarised with our CPP and safeguarding procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Officer in the UK will normally carry out this induction with UK-based staff, volunteers and trustees. The Designated Safeguarding Officer in Colombia will normally carry out this induction with Colombia-based staff, contractors and volunteers.

Children Change Colombia will offer on-going guidance on child protection and safeguarding issues to our partners in Colombia, and help them to reach local standards of child protection within an appropriate time-frame.

5. Behaviour Protocols

Children Change Colombia has a Code of Conduct that applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Children Change Colombia. This outlines our expectations regarding the behaviour of staff in their capacity as representatives of Children Change Colombia. The aim of the code is to ensure that all of our staff and volunteers work in a safe environment and to promote equal rights and respect towards all adults and children. Anyone

who is found to act in contravention of the Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action according to our Disciplinary Procedure.

See the Code of Conduct for more detail.

Guidelines for Children Change Colombia visits to partner projects

Children Change Colombia aims to have regular discussions with partners about appropriate behaviour while visiting their project activities. In addition to the Code of Conduct mentioned above, Children Change Colombia has developed specific guidelines for Children Change Colombia staff, trustees, relevant contractors, interns, volunteers and visitors to Children Change Colombia projects when they come into direct contact with child beneficiaries at projects.

Code of Conduct while on partner visits

Children Change Colombia has a specific code of conduct for partner visits that applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees, as well as anyone who comes into direct contact with children at one of our partner organisations because of the relationship that they have with Children Change Colombia, for example an individual, corporate or institutional donor.

For further information and to read the Code of Conduct and guidelines in full, refer to our Policy on Visits to Partners' Projects.

These principles should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration.

6. Communications about Children

In order to raise funds for our work with children in Colombia, Children Change Colombia produces newsletters, appeals and reports with stories and photos from our various partners. Children Change Colombia supporters and members of the public can also view our website, where they can read stories about our work and view photos of the children.

Sensitive information procedure

Children Change Colombia policy is to ensure that any sensitive information about children remains with the partner and is not stored or communicated by our organisation.

Sensitive information includes any personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child and cause them to be put at risk. This includes name, address or distinguishing physical characteristics. Such information will not be used on Children Change Colombia's website or in any other form of communication for general or public purposes. All names of children included in case studies will be changed by our partners before they are sent to us in the UK office.

As Children Change Colombia increasingly supports work on youth leadership, we have experienced situations where children and young people specifically ask for their names to be

associated with their stories. Children Change Colombia respects the right of children and young people to be acknowledged as the subjects/authors of their own stories, and to share them, where the decision to do so has been an informed one and where children and young people are aware of the ways in which we may share their story.

Where case studies or stories are received from partners with a statement that the child or young person has requested that their real name be used, Children Change Colombia will make a decision about whether to honour this request. Factors that will be taken into account will include the age of the child, any sensitive or potentially harmful information in the story, and other identifying information. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will always be requested to participate in any such discussion and will have the final say on whether to honour such a request or not.

Where a decision is made not to honour this request, the information will be changed in the version of the story that is saved on the Children Change Colombia system and the decision will be communicated to the partner so the child/young person in question can be informed. In all cases, a note will be saved on the story explaining the reasons for/against keeping the child's real name.

In cases where a child's real name is used, only their first name should be used and any other identifying information (surname, school name, neighbourhood etc.) should be changed/omitted in any versions of the story saved on our system and shared with others.

Where there is any risk of identity disclosure, sensitive information can also include such things as HIV status, experience of abuse or links to illegal armed groups. For this reason we ask partners to ensure that any information communicated in case studies is approved for publication beforehand. We ask that partners do not include any sensitive information relating to individual children in these reports, and that they change the names and – when and where they feel appropriate – other identifying details of children featured in case studies.

CCC's Project Director will be the first to receive these reports and they check that this policy is complied with in the first instance, asking partners to make information anonymous as necessary before submitting draft reports to the UK Office. If any Children Change Colombia staff, volunteers or trustees reading a report come across sensitive information where there is no note explaining that a decision has been made to keep the child's real name, they will report this to the Safeguarding team, they will take appropriate action to ensure its removal. The Project Director will take steps to avoid this happening again, by speaking to the partners as appropriate.

Consent for case studies

We will ask all partners to ensure that children and young people give informed consent for their case study to be shared with Children Change Colombia and for us to share this story in reports to donors, social media, and blog or website articles. This applies for both anonymised and non-anonymised case studies.

A child may withdraw their consent at any time for their case study to be used. This must be made clear to the child at the time of giving consent.

Communications guidelines

Children Change Colombia's policy is to ensure that the portrayal of any child or children is not sentimentalized or sensationalised in any way. Children must be presented as individuals with their own identity and dignity preserved. In all forms of communication, Children Change Colombia will avoid:

- Using language and images that could possibly degrade, victimise or shame children.
- Making generalisations that do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation.
- Discrimination of any kind.
- Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child and cause them to be put at risk

Principles

Need: Images can be challenging, hard-hitting but not offensive. They should represent the reality of the situation but recognise that need does not imply neediness. There should be a balance between portraying this need and the positive impact an progress that has been made

Honesty: All portrayal of the lives of the people contributing is honest. We should never construct a scenario or change someone's story and we take care to avoid imagery and communications which a person's situations can be exaggerated or misconstrued

Objectification: We never objectify anyone who benefits from our interventions and our communications make as much room as possible their own stories and experiences.

Dignity : Our images should not cause those already suffering further indignity. We talk to the people we work with about how we may use their story and images and how they think we should tell it.

Photo and Filming policy

In taking and using photos or videos, Children Change Colombia's priority is to ensure the safety of the children:

In the taking and publication of photographs or videos, Children Change Colombia will always be guided by the advice and wishes of our partner projects and the children.

Children Change Colombia will never use children's real names to accompany photos or videos, unless the child has made a request that we do so and given their informed consent. (see above –Sensitive information procedure).

We request written consent from our partner organisations to use the photos from their projects in our publicity and fundraising materials, and ask that partners obtain consent from the individual child and their parent or guardian.

Children Change Colombia staff members are not allowed to take photographs or videos themselves on visits to projects. Instead we will commission a professional photographer or film maker to take photographs or videos and build up a library of photos and videos for use in Children Change Colombia's publicity/fundraising materials.

For further information, please see Children Change Colombia's Photo and Filming Policy.

7. Children Change Colombia events

Children Change Colombia's Communications and Fundraising Officer is responsible for coordinating (non-community) events in the UK. S/he keeps a record of whether there will be children at Children Change Colombia events, and briefs staff and volunteers prior to the event. Children Change Colombia will then carry out a risk assessment and delegate a staff member to have the role of child safety representative as necessary.

When communicating with community fundraisers organising their own events on Children Change Colombia's behalf, we explain that Children Change Colombia is committed to child protection, and point out that if their fundraising activity involves children in any way they should ensure the activity is safe for children as well as for adults.

All volunteers at Children Change Colombia events are expected to sign the Code of Conduct. The Events and Community Fundraiser is responsible for ensuring this. Events volunteers will not be expected to sign the Child Protection Policy, although the Events and Community Fundraiser will brief them on our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

8. Partners' commitment to child protection

A commitment to child protection is a condition of partnership with Children Change Colombia. However, Children Change Colombia recognises that some of our partners may not have considered all possible aspects of child protection as this relates to their work, may not consistently implement all practical measures to protect children, and may not yet have written child protection policies. Children Change Colombia sees the facilitation of improved child protection processes - and the production of a written child protection policy which enshrines these - as an important part of its role as a responsible partner. Where appropriate and practical, Children Change Colombia will support all its partners in improving their child protection procedures by facilitating reflection and discussion, and if appropriate and possible, funding training and necessary organisational changes. This will be done within a timeframe that suits the particular circumstances of the partner, though in most cases

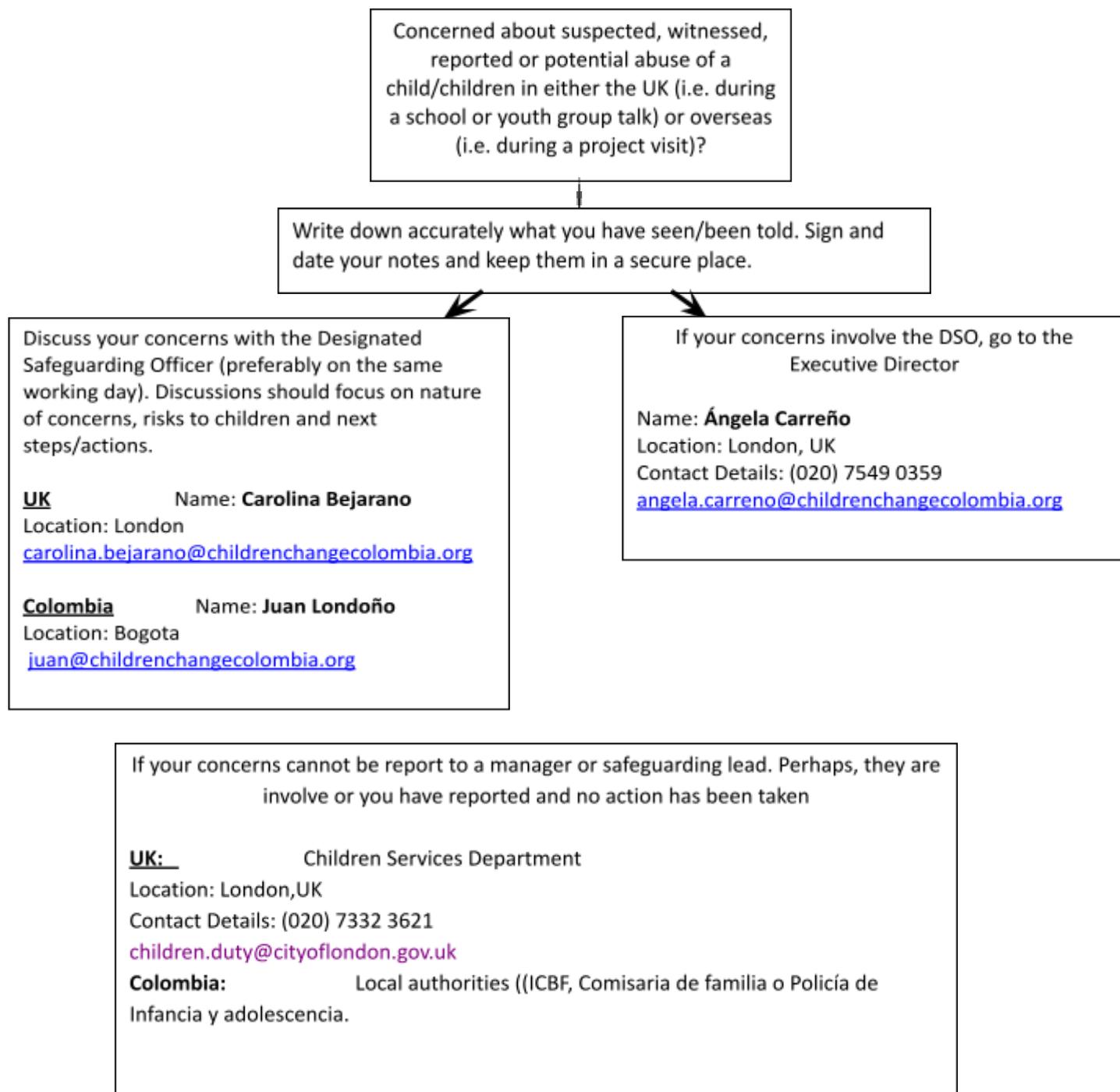
Children Change Colombia would expect the partner to have some form of CPP in place by the end of the first three years of partnership.

Children Change Colombia will ask specific questions relating to CP when forming new partnerships. Strengthening/providing accompaniment on CP forms part of our partnership agreement and is an element of our Partnership Assessment Tool, and may be inserted as a Partnership Objective, as necessary.

Children Change Colombia will offer on-going guidance on child protection and safeguarding issues to all of our partners in Colombia.

9. Reporting Protocol

All Children Change Colombia staff, trustees, relevant contractors, interns and volunteers agree to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged child abuse and/or violation of the Child Protection Policy. This should be done as follows:



10. Dealing with disclosures

Concerns/Disclosures involving Children Change Colombia staff, trustees or volunteers

In the case of a concern being reported about anyone within or representing Children Change Colombia, the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or the Executive Director, if the concern is about the Safeguarding Officer) will convene a meeting of the Safeguarding Group. The Safeguarding Group will provide support and guidance in following the steps outlined within the Complaints Process (Stage 2 – Investigation of a complaint) will be followed. See the Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Group for more information.

All decisions made at all points following a disclosure will be based on the best interests of the child. Where there is any conflict of interest between an adult and a child/young person, the interests of the child/young person will always take precedence.

If the concern involves a criminal act, or is related to suspected/actual abuse of a child/young person, Children Change Colombia will also make a formal report to the appropriate authorities. Any internal investigation should not interfere with a formal investigation by the authorities.

After the matter has been fully investigated, the Chair of the Safeguarding Group will make a decision as to the result of the case and will recommend action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

All decisions will be based on actual or potential risk of harm to children rather than proving that abuse has or has not taken place. It is not the responsibility of Children Change Colombia to prove the validity of concerns but to take appropriate action to minimise risks to children and inform relevant agencies to investigate specific concerns further.

Concerns/Disclosures involving Children Change Colombia partner organisations

In the case of a concern/disclosure involving a staff member or volunteer at one of our partner organisations, or a third party organisation working with children who participate in activities of our partner organisations, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will convene a meeting of the Safeguarding Group to have a preliminary discussion on the matter and to provide guidance on how best to manage it.

A meeting will also be set up between Children Change Colombia and the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer within the partner organisation, the Coordinator for the Children Change Colombia funded project and any other people the partner organisation wishes to invite.

Where the partner has a child protection policy in place, this will guide the procedure to follow. Where the partner's policy does not cover the issue or provide sufficient information, Children Change Colombia will provide guidance based on our internal procedures, outlined above. In all circumstances, the best interests of the child should remain the guiding principle in all decisions made.

If the concern involves a criminal act, or is related to suspected/actual abuse of a child/young person, Children Change Colombia will expect our partner organisation to make a formal

report to the appropriate authorities, unless doing so causes greater risk to the child/young person involved.

Concerns/Disclosures outside of Children Change Colombia and our partners

In the case of any concern/disclosure involving a child who is not participating in one of our partner's projects and an adult who is external to Children Change Colombia and our partners, Children Change Colombia's Designated Safeguarding Officer will, with the support of the Executive Director, establish the appropriate person within the organisation in question to whom a formal report should be made. If the concern involves a criminal act, or is related to suspected/actual abuse of a child/young person, Children Change Colombia will also make a formal report to the appropriate authorities. Children Change Colombia will not assume any responsibility in such a case for establishing whether a concern has been reported in good faith.

All disclosures will be dealt with confidentially where possible, and information will be stored securely.