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Child Protection Risk Management

Facilitator: Brett Gresham – AVID Program Manager

The Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program is an Australian Government initiative.

Today's session

- Why the need for this Briefing?
- Brief review of key issues from the ELearning module.
- Explore how vulnerability and risk factors increase the need for child protection.
- Identify risk mitigation strategies
- Responding to and reporting child protection concerns

Why Child Protection?

- To help prepare you for child protection issues you might encounter on assignment – NOT to make you a CPO
- Volunteers are required to be aware and informed of how to minimise risk of and respond to child protection issues on assignment.
- Children are at the heart of development work

Take care of yourself

Sensitive material

E-Learning Review

What are three key messages that resonated with you from the Child Protection e-learning module?

Risk / Protective Factors

- **Risk factors**
 - Vulnerability of the children
 - Nature of the activity
 - Setting
- **Protective factors**
 - Legal context
 - Policy context

Risk Management Case Scenario

- A male volunteer in a Pacific location is working in a small community. He is a teacher with 20 years of experience on assignment with the Ministry of Education
- Unrelated to his assignment, he has been offering tutoring to 14-15 year old students from the local high school
- He is allowing them to come to his home and use his computer.

Students attend tutoring in pairs

1. *What are the risk factors?*
2. *What advice could you give to the volunteer?*

The Risk Factors

- The volunteer is alone with the children
- Having children attend in pairs may decrease the risk...
- Children are inside his home with no other adult present
- His actions may be perceived negatively by others
- The volunteer is in clear breach of the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
- There is a risk of harm to young people and the program

Risk Management Strategies

- Ask the In-Country Manager or CPO for guidance on how to continue tutoring while managing the risk
- Changing the setting for the activity reduces the risk for the young person, volunteer and the program (in an office where other adults are present or include a second adult)
- If a volunteer could motivate a Teacher to participate the outcome would be more sustainable
- Parental permission

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Volunteers are required to report the following Child Protection Concerns.

- Disclosures of **actual** harm, abuse or exploitation of a child
- The **potential** risk of harm, abuse or exploitation of a child
- **Breaches** of the DFAT Child Protection Policy for the aid program
- Breaches of the host organisation's Child Protection Policy by host organisation staff and others engaged with the host organisation.

Procedure for Reporting Concerns

- Do not attempt to investigate the incident or your suspicion
- Document the known facts as well as your suspicions
- Email your ICMT or CPO (phone call in case of emergency)
- CPO may need to report the concerns to DFAT

Coby Charters

E: cpo@scopeglobal.com

Skype: cpo.scopeglobal

T: +61 8 8364 8500

You will receive feedback in relation to your report

Reporting Scenario

What could you do?

- You are on assignment with a primary school and you witness a Teacher hitting a student across the back with a stick. This is not the first incident of corporal punishment that you are aware of.
- Corporal punishment is not unlawful in this country but it is frowned upon by the Ministry of Education and the government is working towards reforming the law to prohibit it.

Reporting Scenario

The volunteer involved did the following.

- Facilitated a session for Teachers on Behavioural Management Strategies
- Documented the incident including specifics of dates, persons involved and actions undertaken
- Consulted with ICMT.
- Reported to Scope Global CPO
- Reported to the School Principal, Ministry of Education

Outcome

- CPO consulted with and made a formal notification to DFAT CPU
- Volunteer was offered support by CPO with regular updates
- No further immediate action was taken by SG or DFAT
- Situation will be monitored and continued future engagement with school will be assessed
- School has reaffirmed its commitment to stamp out Corporal Punishment

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Psychological Response Services

- Should I report?
- Am I in danger?
- What can I do?
- Is there someone I can talk to?
- Do I need to debrief?



response@responsepsychological.com

Telephone

+61 3 9016 0400

Skype

responsepsychological

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How else you can engage in creating a child safe environment?

- Be a Child Safe advocate
- Be Proactive (minimise risk)
- Be Responsive (respond to harm)



Resources and Further Reading

- **Australian Government's Child Protection Policy (2013)** for Australia's overseas aid program.
- **National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009-2020).**
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (in particular Articles 43-54 which describe how governments and international organisations should ensure children have access to rights).
- <http://www.unicef.org/>
- <http://napcan.org.au/prevention/>
- www.childsafe-international.org
- www.thinkchildsafe.org

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ANSWERS

QUESTIONS

**Thankyou for listening
Any questions?**

