



MAHOLA

A local health care system

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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Approved by:

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Chairman/woman of the Mahola Steering Committee

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2. SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT | 4 |
| 3. SYSTEM OPERATION & MAINTENANCE | 5 |
| 4. DISPOSAL OF SYSTEM COMPONENTS | 6 |
| 5. CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER | 7 |
| 6. REFERENCES | 8 |

Mahola – a local health care system

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and direction regarding child protection and safeguarding aspects throughout the Mahola project, and the entire life cycle of the local health care system that the Mahola project aims to develop.

This ‘Mahola’ system is a complex and integrated system in the sense that it contains multiple system elements such as People (e.g. ambulance drivers, nurses and/or mid-wives, first aiders and cleaners), Hardware (e.g. ambulance vehicle and buildings), Processes (e.g. how to deal with a patient from an administrative viewpoint), Information (e.g. policies such as an environmental protection policy and a safeguarding policy, procedures, job descriptions, templates for checklists and contracts), as well as the related Equipment and Supplies to operate and maintain the system over time (see Figure 1).

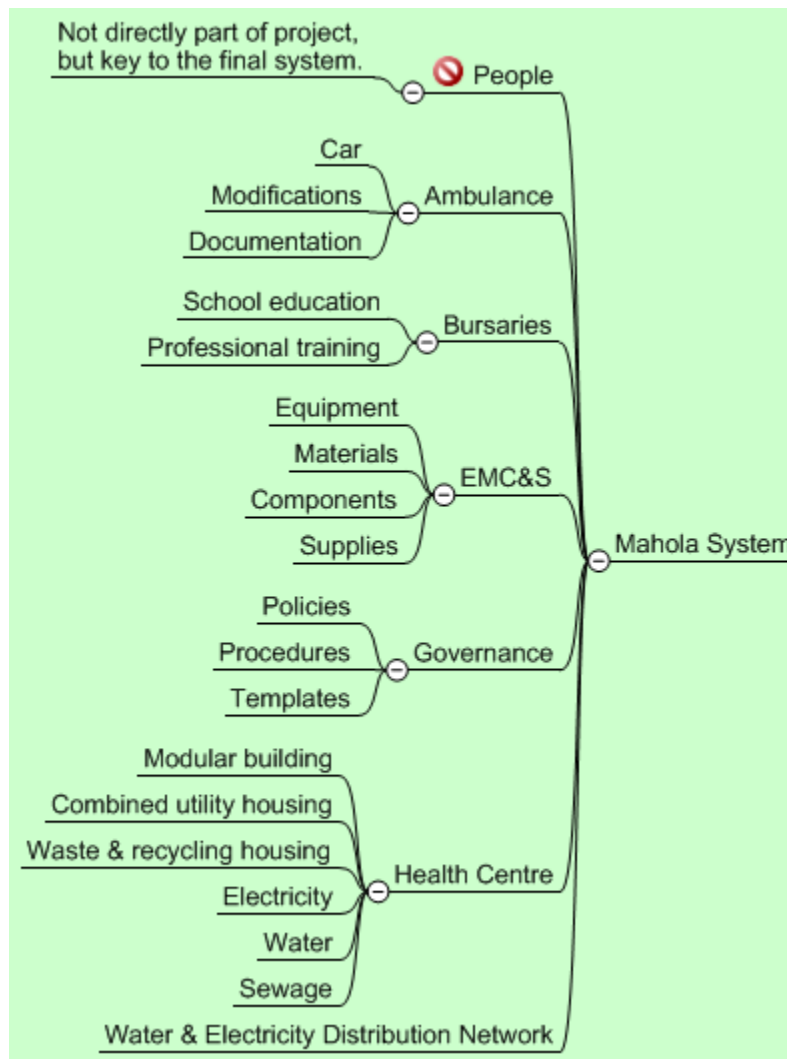


Figure 1: Elements of the local health care system

Mahola – a local health care system

Therefore, questions regarding child protection and safeguarding aspects during all life cycle phases, i.e. the system development; the operation and maintenance of the local health care system; as well as in case of the disposal of certain components thereof, have to be anticipated, investigated and answered in order to achieve the highest possible impact in terms of safeguarding; both directly (e.g. in the premises of the health centre) and indirectly (e.g. via increased awareness among the local population in general).

The Mahola Project acknowledges a responsibility to the protection of children and the safeguarding of all people, in particular the vulnerable, and we express our commitment towards implementing operations, which will promote the highest safeguarding standards possible. The Mahola Project will consistently strive to raise awareness in the community, encourage participation and educate all concerned and even those who live locally but are not directly involved with child protection and safeguarding matters.

Child Protection & Safeguarding are primarily about the elimination of abuse and unacceptable behaviour, in particular against children and/or vulnerable persons. Abuse can be defined as wrong or improper use (e.g. abuse of privileges), harshly or coarsely insulting language, bad or improper treatment; corrupt or improper practice or custom; rape or sexual assault. Unacceptable behaviour can be defined as behaviour that, having regard to all of the circumstances, would be offensive, belittling, abusive or threatening to another person or adverse to morale, discipline or workplace cohesion, or otherwise not in the interests of the local population.

This policy governs the management of the child protection and safeguarding aspects of our project and the resulting health care system, both during the development and throughout the entire life cycle of the health care system. The policy will be reviewed and updated regularly by a nominated Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer and validated by the local Steering Committee.

2. SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

During the development of the local health care system from the system specification via the concept and detailed design, right to the implementation and integration of the system, decisions have to be guided by relevant Child Protection & Safeguarding objectives.

The main Child Protection & Safeguarding objectives during the system development are to establish, communicate to all concerned (, i.e. all members of the Mahola system and the local steering committee, all patients and their visitors, all school children and/or vulnerable persons involved in awareness sessions and/or volunteering), maintain and monitor clear processes to:

- Deal with allegations or suspicions of abuse, and/or complaints about unacceptable behaviour;

Mahola – a local health care system

- Record all child protection and safeguarding concerns (including incidents, allegations and/or suspicions of abuse);
- Securely and confidentially store the related information;
- Report to an appropriate external authority any concerns without delay;
- Assess the suitability of candidates to work with children and vulnerable persons during the recruitment or selection (as steering committee member, employee, volunteer, or bursary student);
- Require all steering committee members and employees to sign a declaration form declaring any on-going or previous court convictions or investigations;
- Make aware all adult members of the Mahola system of the expected code of behaviour for adults working with children and vulnerable persons, and how to run safe activities (e.g. taking into account supervision ratios, health and safety issues, trips away from home);
- Provide guidelines on the use of IT (including the use of images, mobile phones, e-mail, cameras and the internet);
- Provide guidelines on dealing with difficult behaviour of children or other vulnerable persons that does not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment;
- Ensure the elimination of bullying behaviour;
- Ensure translation of this policy into the local language and provide a child friendly version;
- Direct both victims and perpetrators to appropriate local services;
- Provide a written implementation plan with specific timelines;
- Provide mechanisms to monitor compliance with this policy.

3. SYSTEM OPERATION & MAINTENANCE

During the operation and maintenance of the local health care system, until the end of its life cycle, decisions have to be guided by relevant Child Protection & Safeguarding objectives.

The main Child Protection & Safeguarding objectives during the system operation and maintenance are to communicate to all concerned (, i.e. all members of the Mahola system and the local steering committee, all patients and their visitors, all school children and/or vulnerable persons involved in awareness sessions and/or volunteering), maintain and monitor the established processes to:

- Deal with allegations or suspicions of abuse, and/or complaints about unacceptable behaviour;
- Record all child protection and safeguarding concerns (including incidents, allegations and/or suspicions of abuse);

Mahola – a local health care system

- Securely and confidentially store the related information;
- Report to an appropriate external authority any concerns without delay;
- Assess the suitability of candidates to work with children and vulnerable persons during the recruitment or selection (as steering committee member, employee, volunteer, or bursary student);
- Require all steering committee members and employees to sign a declaration form declaring any on-going or previous court convictions or investigations;
- Make aware all adult members of the Mahola system of the expected code of behaviour for adults working with children and vulnerable persons, and how to run safe activities (e.g. taking into account supervision ratios, health and safety issues, trips away from home);
- Provide guidelines on the use of IT (including the use of images, mobile phones, e-mail, cameras and the internet);
- Provide guidelines on dealing with difficult behaviour of children or other vulnerable persons that does not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment;
- Ensure the elimination of bullying behaviour;
- Ensure translation of this policy into the local language and provide a child friendly version;
- Direct both victims and perpetrators to appropriate local services;
- Provide a written implementation plan with specific timelines;
- Provide mechanisms to monitor compliance with this policy.

4. DISPOSAL OF SYSTEM COMPONENTS

During the disposal of system components of the local health care system throughout its operational life, and at the end of the system life cycle, decisions have to be guided by relevant Child Protection & Safeguarding objectives.

The main Child Protection & Safeguarding objectives during the disposal of system components are to uphold and communicate to all people who are involved in the disposal of system components the established processes to:

- Deal with allegations or suspicions of abuse, and/or complaints about unacceptable behaviour;
- Record all child protection and safeguarding concerns (including incidents, allegations and/or suspicions of abuse);
- Securely and confidentially store the related information;
- Report to an appropriate external authority any concerns without delay;

Mahola – a local health care system

- Assess the suitability of candidates to work with children and vulnerable persons during the recruitment or selection (as steering committee member, employee, volunteer, or bursary student);
- Require all steering committee members and employees to sign a declaration form declaring any on-going or previous court convictions or investigations;
- Make aware all adult members of the Mahola system of the expected code of behaviour for adults working with children and vulnerable persons, and how to run safe activities (e.g. taking into account supervision ratios, health and safety issues, trips away from home);
- Provide guidelines on the use of IT (including the use of images, mobile phones, e-mail, cameras and the internet);
- Provide guidelines on dealing with difficult behaviour of children or other vulnerable persons that does not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment;
- Ensure the elimination of bullying behaviour;
- Ensure translation of this policy into the local language and provide a child friendly version;
- Direct both victims and perpetrators to appropriate local services;
- Provide a written implementation plan with specific timelines;
- Provide mechanisms to monitor compliance with this policy.

5. CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The local Steering Committee will nominate a responsible Child Protection & Safeguarding Officer. The office can be held in parallel with any other positions in the local health care system. This nominated focal point for Child Protection & Safeguarding matters will drive the continuous improvement efforts to uphold the highest possible safeguarding standards regarding all aspects of the health care system, including the extended network of first aiders and training sessions for the local population in general and specifically at the surrounding schools.

In particular he/she will:

- Make local teachers, pupils and their families, patients and their families, and all active members of the local health care system aware of the importance of the proven approaches to ensure the highest levels of safeguarding;
- Regularly review the local practice;
- Initiate related improvement actions and/or projects;
- Regularly review this policy, at least on a yearly basis, and if necessary update it;
- Regularly report to the Steering Committee on all Child Protection & Safeguarding matters;

Mahola – a local health care system

- Support the Administrator by providing inputs for regular reporting;
- Support the Trainer by providing inputs for and actively participating in delivering related training and awareness sessions.

6. REFERENCES

Specific references may be added at a later point in time.