



## **CHANGE FOR CHILDREN ASSOCIATION (CFCA) Volunteer Risk Mitigation and Management Plan**

---

### **Purpose**

Volunteers are a vital component of CFCA and the work that we do. Through their dedicated support, CFCA can achieve lasting results for those living in poverty in the developing world. CFCA is committed to providing safe and secure opportunities for Canadians to volunteer their time and skills to help communities in need. We recognize that to do so, having the proper processes, procedures and culture in place to manage and mitigate risks associated with our work is essential. CFCA volunteer projects take place in various communities in the Global South that each have an individual set of risks associated with the social, political and environmental context of the specific area. We recognize that travelling abroad involves a certain degree of risk that cannot be completely avoided. Our aim is not to eliminate all risks, rather to limit and respond to potential risks through carefully constructed risk mitigation and management plans. We want to provide a safe and secure environment for all CFCA volunteers.

### **Principles**

#### **Collective Commitment**

- Successful risk management and mitigation is dependent on every CFCA volunteer, staff member, and related personnel. Each stakeholder has a role in ensuring the safety and security of themselves and others.

#### **Organizational Culture**

- Making risk management an integral part of CFCA's organizational culture is essential. This involves ensuring that risk management is embedded into all operations rather than seen as distinct from day to day activities.

#### **Safe and Secure Environments**

- CFCA is committed to taking the proper steps to maintain a safe and secure environment for all volunteers, staff, and related personnel. This includes measures to identify, prevent, mitigate, and respond to any incidents or events that may compromise the safety and security of CFCA personnel and the environments they work in.

### **Objectives and Strategies**

#### **Risk Assessment**

Before projects are introduced or when changes are made to existing projects, a thorough risk assessment is conducted by the CFCA's International Project Manager. Research is conducted independently and directly through consultation with current and potential overseas partners.

The information collected in risk assessments is used to make decisions about current and future projects, project partners, and project locations.

### **Risk Assessment Objectives**

- Create awareness of hazards and risk.
- Identify who may be at risk (e.g., employees, cleaners, visitors, contractors, the public, etc.).
- Determine whether a control program is required for a particular hazard.
- Determine if existing control measures are adequate or if more should be done.
- Prevent injuries or illnesses, especially when done at the design or planning stage.
- Prioritize hazards and control measures.
- Meet legal requirements where applicable.

### **Risk Assessment Process:**

#### **Identification**

- A risk assessment will be conducted for all projects and locations. We work with our global partners to define hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm to CFCA volunteers, staff, and related personnel. This partnership approach means we have trusted program personnel in each host community who oversee the local risk identification process and spot new risks as they emerge.

#### **Risk Analysis**

- Identified risks will be assessed based on the combination of the probability of occurrence and severity of the impact. Information used in this process may include current and historical data, theoretical analysis, informed opinions, and the concerns of stakeholders.

#### **Risk Prioritization**

- Identified risks will be ranked to determine which risk is the most serious so that an action list can be created based on the highest priority risks. Risks will be examined using a risk matrix table which shows the relationship between probability and severity. This is done by taking into account exposure and potential for incident, injury, or illness.

#### **Risk Mitigation/Hazard Control**

- After risks are prioritized, the options for handling risks will be decided. A risk mitigation plan will be developed and monitored for effectiveness.

#### **Risk mitigation handling options include:**

- Assume/Accept: Acknowledge the existence of a particular risk and make a deliberate decision to accept it without engaging in special efforts to control it.
- Avoid: Adjust program requirements or constraints to eliminate or reduce the risk.
- Control: Implement actions to minimize the impact or likelihood of the risk.
- Watch/Monitor: Monitor the environment for changes that affect the nature and/or the impact of the risk.

## Review and Monitoring

- Risk assessments are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis to ensure the risk assessment is complete and accurate, and to make sure control methods are effective. This is essential to be sure that any changes that impact projects and volunteers have not introduced any new hazards or changed hazards.

## Documentation

- Risk assessments and control actions taken are recorded and stored based on the level of risk involved and legislated requirements. The records show that CFCA has conducted a proper hazard review, determined the risk of hazards, implemented suitable control measures, and reviewed and monitored all hazards involved.

## Risk Mitigation Focus Areas

### 1. Identified Risk: Medical Emergency

#### Risk Mitigation: Avoid

- Team leaders and participants are required to disclose all health conditions relevant to travel and work in the host community with their application. In addition, applicants who disclose health conditions will be required to submit a notice from their physician, indicating that they are fit to travel and possibly participate in physical work (level of work will vary from participant to participant; delegation to delegation) in tropical conditions

#### Risk Mitigation: Control

- Team leaders are required to have or take a Medical First Aid Response course.
- Teams will travel with comprehensive Medical First Aid Response kit, purchased and prepared by CFCA.
- Team members will receive pre-travel orientation and training, which will outline potential environmental risks and prevention strategies.
- CFCA's team leader and partner organizations will be trained to implement CFCA's medical emergency response plan for delegations as detailed in the next section.

#### Medical Emergency Response Plan:

- In the case of life-threatening medical emergencies related to accidents during community visits, snake/wild animal bites, malaria/dengue fever, parasites, cardiovascular or respiratory failure, or allergic reactions, Change for Children will conduct the following protocol, depending on severity of medical emergency (1-minor, 3-major):

#### 1. Team leader, trained in Medical First Aid, addresses health issue;

- Participant rests at accommodation, attended to by the team leader.
- Team leader relies on medicine in First Aid kit to treat minor injury, or illness
- Team leader fills out Injury/Sickness Report for records.

2. Community medical professionals address health issue;
  - Participant visits local health clinic to consult advice of the doctor, or nurse, and treatment for minor injury, or illness.
  - Team leader closely monitors the healing, or recovery of participant.
  
3. Participant is evacuated from community by vehicle or plane;
  - Team leader and community host notify the local hospital.
  - Participant is accompanied to the hospital by the head translator and team leader.
  - Team remains with assistant translator and appointed team leader at the local hospital.
  - Team leader and community host notify CFCA's Executive Director as soon as possible of the situation.
  - CFCA's Executive Director immediately notifies participant's emergency contact.

All medical incidents (minor and major) will be documented by the team leader, who is responsible for completing CFCA's Incident Report Form.

## **2. Identified Risk: Natural Disaster**

Risk Mitigation: Avoid

- Teams will not travel during the hurricane season.
- Project destinations and host-communities will be selected based on their ability to effectively evacuate teams from emergency situations caused by natural disasters.

Risk Mitigation: Control

- Team leaders and partner organizations will be trained to implement CFCA's natural disaster emergency response plan as detailed in the next section.

### **Natural Disaster Emergency Response Plan:**

- In the case of natural disasters, CFCA will conduct the following protocol, depending on severity of the natural disaster (1-minor, 3-major):
  1. Team gathers at housing to wait out the disaster;
    - CFCA team leader consults with host-community leader.
  
  2. Team seeks shelter in community emergency shelter facilities on high-ground to wait out disaster;
    - CFCA team leader consults with host-community leader.
  
  3. Based on consultation with host-community, the team is evacuated from the community at the first opportunity by plane or helicopter;
    - Team leader informs CFCA Executive Director about the evacuation and confirms the safety of the team.

- CFCA’s Executive Director immediately contacts the team participants’ emergency contacts regarding the location and safety of the team.

### **3. Identified Risk: Political Insecurity**

#### Risk Mitigation: Avoid

- CFCA will only partner with organizations and host-communities in politically stable contexts. Every attempt will be made to ensure that projects are supported by local communities and integrated into community life.

#### Risk Mitigation: Watch/Monitor

- When sending teams to new locations, CFCA representatives will travel to the location pre-project to monitor the location, political atmosphere, and community sentiment towards the project.
- Pre-departure, CFCA’s Executive Director will closely monitor the political climate of the selected location, and should any instability arise, every attempt will be made to defer the team to a safer location.

#### Risk Mitigation: Control

- CFCA will strive to build and maintain relationships with partner organizations and communities, in order to provide the most secure experience possible.
- CFCA will register all project activities/itineraries and participants with the Canadian embassy working in the country or region.
- Team members will receive pre-travel orientation and training, which will outline potential political/cultural risks and prevention strategies.
- CFCA’s team leader and partner organizations will be trained to implement CFCA’s political insecurity emergency response plan.

### **Political Insecurity Emergency Response Plan:**

In the case of political insecurity in the host-community, including any signs of serious hostility or threat to team safety and well-being, CFCA will conduct the following protocol, depending on severity of the situation (1-minor, 4-major):

1. Report incident to host-community leaders (municipality).
2. Report incident to local police authorities.
3. Report incident to local military authorities.
4. Evacuate team at first opportunity by plane or helicopter;
  - CFCA’s team leader contacts Change for Children’s Executive Director to report incident and team evacuation.
  - CFCA’s Executive Director contacts participant’s emergency contact to report incident and safe evacuation.

*Approved by CFCA Board, Date April, 2019*

*Date for Review: April, 2022*