PSEA Emergency Simulation Exercise

Practical guidance for conducting a PSEA emergency simulation (SIMEX)

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Tools

- Tool 1: PSEA emergency simulation - Facilitation guide
- Tool 2: PSEA emergency simulation - Accompaniment resources

Audience

PSEA/safeguarding/ protection focal points

Senior managers

MEAL staff

Administration staff

Introduction to the CRS PSEA emergency simulation exercise

Indonesian partner staff take part in a virtual emergency simulation exercise.

Overview

The protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) emergency simulation exercise, or SIMEX, is an end-of-project learning event with two purposes: (1) Summarizing PSEA learning that partners obtained during the Strengthening Partners in Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SPSEA) project's trainings on the internal reporting and investigation system (IRIS) and feedback, complaints and response mechanisms (FCRM); (2) Enabling partners to identify gaps in their PSEA policies and procedures, and define necessary actions to address them.

Thirty SPSEA partners in Indonesia, Haiti and the Philippines completed capacity-building sessions on the basic principles of PSEA, based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's eight Minimum Operating Standards. In the project's final year, CRS conducted a simulation alongside partner senior managers and PSEA/safeguarding focal points and other relevant staff, such as those in MEAL and HR. It was as realistic as possible given the online modality chosen due to COVID-19 restrictions. All country teams could adjust the general scenario and exercise package to their own context.

Two purposes

Summarize PSEA learning

Identify and address gaps in PSEA policies and procedures

Each CRS country program was expected to provide a final exercise report identifying common gaps in partners' PSEA policies and procedures related to handling SEA reports and providing victim/survivor support through referral mechanisms. Due to the virtual simulation necessitated by COVID-19 restrictions, the original objective of testing all PSEA-related policies and procedures was modified to focus only on the SEA report-handling mechanism and the initial stages of an investigation, including activation of the referral mechanism that partners put in place during the project.

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The simulation used a cluster approach that had proved effective in the partners' accompaniment process during the project—grouping partners with geographic, structural or other PSEA-relevant similarities, with not more than two partners per simulation event. This approach seemed the most appropriate given the high number of participants in the exercise and its virtual modality.

The exercise materials are based on emergency simulation materials and lessons learned from previous simulations, primarily by the CRS Philippines and Indonesia teams. The platform envisioned for the exercise's virtual modality is Microsoft Teams, which the partners became accustomed to during online accompaniment sessions and trainings. The timeframe for the exercise delivery varied from one project country to another due to project implementation and no-cost-extension factors.

Purpose

The purpose of the simulation is to evaluate the preparedness and PSEA-relevant policies, procedures and response mechanisms that partners put in place during the SPSEA project. It provides opportunities to validate existing PSEA mechanisms strengthened during the SPSEA project and to identify areas for enhancement. It will also identify new good practices that partners adopted due to the support received through the project.

Scope and simulation scenario

In the simulation, the organization is managing evacuation centers accommodating evacuees after a natural disaster, where reports of SEA incidents are received through the community feedback, complaints and response mechanism and the organization's internal reporting system. Participants will review the processes in place for responding to such reports, including the steps of receiving, recording, acknowledging, analyzing and responding. Further processes will include initial investigation steps, such as establishing response and investigation teams, and activating referral pathways for victim/survivor support. It will also test roles and responsibilities, and coordination and use of internal standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the feedback, complaints and response mechanisms, internal reporting and investigation, and referral pathways.

General emergency scenario

The scenario provides statistics on the disaster's impact, with a focus on the displacement of people, damage to infrastructure and immediate needs. Background information includes details about seven evacuation centers that can accommodate about 35,000 people. Basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs are highlighted, as well as the need for food and nonfood items (NFI). The general emergency scenario can be slightly revised in terms of the type of natural disaster as relevant for each country context.

Specific project scenario

To set up a context for the occurrence of a realistic SEA issue, the specific project scenario provides details of the partner's programmatic response to the emergency described in the general emergency scenario. The partner's response is defined as evacuation center management with a 24-hour staff presence, providing WASH, shelter, food and nonfood items within the center.

Objectives

Participants practice the handling of sensitive SEA-related feedback received through **community-based feedback, complaints and response mechanisms**.

Participants practice the handling of sensitive SEA-related feedback received through the organization's **internal reporting mechanism**.

Participants practice the **initial stages of an SEA-related investigation** (setting up response and investigation teams, designing investigation plan).

Participants identify **challenges and gaps encountered in handling sensitive feedback** within their organizational systems.

Participants describe how their feedback and reporting mechanisms are responsive to the **principles of accessibility, safety, confidentiality and a survivor-centered approach** when handling SEA issues.

Participants **apply the learnings from other project learning events**, namely the trainings in feedback, complaints and response mechanisms, and internal reporting and investigation.

Participants **effectively use the referral pathway** to provide timely support to the victim/survivor.

Prerequisites for success

Throughout the project, CRS partners have developed PSEA-responsive policies and procedures to enable them to effectively address SEA issues. The following policies and procedures are needed for effective partner participation in the exercise:

- Feedback, complaints and response mechanism SOPs
- Internal reporting and investigation system SOPs
- Referral pathway documents

Key documents

- FCRM SOPs
- IRIS SOPs
- Referral pathway documents

SESSIONS

The simulation consists of five sessions, the first two for technical preparation and introduction, and the second two as exercises in receiving SEA-related feedback for unforeseen events. In the last session, participants exchange insights on the processes and learnings while highlighting challenges and gaps in the PSEA processes tested.

Additional documents support the simulation exercise:

Supporting document	Purpose and actions
1. **HO 1: General emergency scenario**	Emergency overview
2. **HO 2: Specific project scenario**	Partner response overview
3. **HO 3: FCRM SEA complaint**	Unforeseen event 1
4. **HO 4: Staff SEA report**	Unforeseen event 2
5. **Message forms (included in HOs 3 and 4)**	SIMEX tool for both unforeseen events filled in and submitted to SIMEX observers
6. **Investigation plan template**	IRIS training tool

PSEA processes tested

The exercise will test a number of PSEA-relevant policies and procedures that partners have put in place throughout the SPSEA project.

SEA-responsive feedback, complaints and response mechanism

During Session 3, participants receive an unforeseen event scenario in the form of an MS Teams message. The message contains a report from a program participant in an evacuation center who is distressed after having been inappropriately touched during an NFI distribution. This was received though an official feedback, complaints and response channel and shared directly with the MEAL officer appointed by the partner organization for the purpose of the exercise. Upon receipt of the report, participants are given one hour to document the procedure for handling this kind of sensitive feedback, making clear reference to their adopted FCRM SOPs.

Participants are given one hour to document the procedure for handling sensitive feedback.

Internal reporting and investigation system

During Session 4, participants receive a staff report on the same incident that alleges SEA by a staff member. This will be received by the director of the participating partner organization. The report will allege multiple staff misconduct incidents of sexual exploitation in the evacuation center. This part of the exercise includes establishing the investigation and response teams, making the investigation report and activating the referral pathway.

Expected outputs

Operation/functions tested	EXERCISE 1: Feedback, complaints and response mechanism
Documenting the handling of the sensitive feedback process	**Expected outputs** ■ Receive, record, acknowledge, analyze and respond to an SEA report, ensuring the confidentiality and safety of all parties involved. ■ MEAL officer records SEA report as sensitive feedback and forwards it to PSEA focal point or director using an incident report form or sensitive feedback form. ■ If forwarded to the PSEA focal point, the report is escalated immediately to the director. ■ Demonstrate separate handling procedure for sensitive feedback. ■ Escalation to senior leadership or PSEA focal point follows the adopted IRIS/escalation procedure. ■ Feedback about received allegation and further steps are provided to the reporter within 24 to 48 hours.
Operation/functions tested	**Exercise 2: Internal reporting and investigation system**
Steps for establishing investigation and response teams and documenting the process	**Expected outputs** ■ Assign staff to the **investigation team** that are not related to the case, not in a supervisory role to the alleged perpetrator, and are trained in investigations. The team is gender balanced and consists of at least two people. ■ Job descriptions, terms of reference and IRIS SOPs are used when filling team posts. ■ Assign staff to the **response team** to oversee the investigation. The team is headed by the director and includes other administration, human resources or programmatic staff not related to the case.
Actions for victim/ survivor protection	**Expected outputs** ■ HR and director decide on immediate actions to remove alleged perpetrator's access to program participants. ■ Director activates referral pathway for immediate victim/survivor support.
Initial investigation process	**Expected outputs** ■ Development of investigation plan.

Methodology

- Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the simulation exercise was designed for virtual delivery, and can also be used for face-to-face events.
- For partners with limited internet access, the SIMEX materials can be shared in advance and password protected.
- One observer for each partner takes responsibility for sharing passwords via SMS with the designated person in the partner team.
- Staff from each organization ensure COVID-19 protocols, including physical distancing, in their location.
- In the simulation, two SEA reports reach the organization through different channels during an emergency response in an evacuation center.
- Participants will not be asked to perform the actual tasks, but to explain PSEA responses based on their own policies and procedures.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the simulation exercise was designed for virtual delivery, but the materials can also be used for face-to-face events. The COVID-safe methodology used is tabletop. For partners with limited internet access, the SIMEX materials can be shared in advance and password protected. Each handout is numbered in chronological order for opening, and information provided on who is to open each document (HO 3 is for MEAL and HO 4 for the director). One observer for each partner takes responsibility for sharing passwords via SMS with the designated person in the partner team. Because more than one organization takes part in the simulation, each staff group is in a separate location. They ensure physical distancing in their location, and follow the exercise via mobile phone call with the staff of the other participant organization.

In the simulation, two SEA reports reach the organization during an emergency response in an evacuation center. Both reports refer to the same SEA case, but are reported with different levels of detail through different channels: the feedback, complaints and response mechanism and the internal reporting mechanism. The two scenarios will be used in two separate virtual sessions. Both exercises will be based on the FCRM and IRIS SOPs designed and adopted by the participating partner organizations. Participants will not be asked to perform the actual tasks, but to explain PSEA responses based on their own policies and procedures related to handling SEA complaints, initial investigation stages and activation of the referral pathway for victim/survivor support.

Participants will be selected from among partner staff that are involved in complaints-handling processes, such as directors, PSEA focal points, MEAL and HR staff.

It is assumed that while all participants will be familiar with their respective organizational FCRM and IRIS procedures, each one will be playing their own role in the exercise and will be able to refer to relevant SOPs.

Simulation exercise management team

Each CRS country program should appoint a SIMEX management team. The simulation team leader is responsible for the overall planning, implementation and evaluation of the exercise. Team members include two observers/scorers for each participating partner organization. As each SIMEX recommends participation by two partners, there should be a total of five CRS staff members in the SIMEX management team: four observers/scorers and the simulation team leader. Besides CRS staff working directly on the SPSEA project, other CP staff might include MEAL and HR staff that are familiar with the SPSEA project and the expected outcomes to be evaluated by the exercise.

Five-member team

Simulation team leader and four observers/scorers

The SIMEX management team will evaluate the exercise using a set of expected outputs, and assess whether the SEA report-handling mechanisms and systems are resilient to addressing SEA complaints in an emergency. CP teams may decide to include other external observers of the exercise without scoring authority.

The table sets out the proposed composition of the SIMEX management team:

FUNCTION	POSITION	ORGANIZATION	MAIN RESPONSIBILITY
Simulation team leader	SPSEA project staff	CRS	Simulation management
Observers/ scorers	SPSEA project staff	CRS	Scoring and online facilitation; familiarization with partner's policies and procedures; observation of partner's application of PSEA policies and procedures.
	SPSEA project staff	CRS	
	CP MEAL staff	CRS	
	CP HR staff	CRS	

The management team needs to ensure that the partner staff participating in the simulation are familiar with the following documents:

- Feedback, complaints and response mechanism SOPs
- Internal Reporting and Investigation System SOPs
- Referral pathway document

The simulation team leader and the simulation management team should seek support for the exercise from the HRD PSEA technical advisor should any adaptations to the simulation materials be necessary.

Evaluation, scoring and reporting

Evaluation

After four exercise sessions, participants will have a debriefing session in a joint call. This will be an opportunity to reflect on the following questions:

- What worked well?
- What were the key challenges?
- What did you feel most confident about?

They will also be asked to fill in the participant feedback form electronically during the debriefing session and submit it to the team.

Scoring

With the help of the Philippines CP MEAL team, a score card with 28 required outputs was developed for the exercise. With up to three points awarded per output, the highest possible score is 84 and the lowest, 28. The final score is the average of the two scorers' totals, and the overall performance of the participating partner organization is the score as a percentage of the maximum possible score. A minimum 70% pass rate was agreed upon after partner and CP consultations.

Each of the two exercise sessions in the simulation activity has several actions and outputs which the simulation participants are expected to deliver. The outputs for both sessions are recorded in the same score card in separate sections. Two observers for each partner fill in one score card each.

Immediately after the exercise, the simulation team leader will collect the score cards and come up with the average score for each partner with the help of the whole simulation exercise team. The average score must be calculated per each output, based on the scoring results of both scorers.

During an accompaniment session with each partner individually, the results are shared and follow-up actions on strengthening PSEA processes agreed upon.

Reporting

The final simulation exercise report should be submitted by the simulation management team within two weeks of the last simulation event. The report should include the following information at a minimum:

- Lessons learned and recommendations from the simulation process
- Gaps in partner PSEA processes (FCRM, IRIS and referral pathways)
- Strengths in partner PSEA processes (FCRM, IRIS and referral pathways)
- Action plan to address gaps (further support)

Tool 1 PSEA emergency simulation exercise: Facilitation plan

Duration: 4 hours

Objectives

- Participants are able to practice the handling of sensitive feedback related to SEA received through the community-based feedback, complaints and response mechanism.
- Participants are able to practice the handling of sensitive feedback related to SEA received through the internal reporting mechanism.
- Participants are able to practice the initial stages of an SEA-related investigation (setting up of response and investigation teams, designing an investigation plan).
- Participants are able to identify challenges and gaps encountered in handling sensitive feedback within their organizational systems.
- Participants are able to describe how their feedback and reporting mechanisms are responsive to principles of accessibility, safety, confidentiality and a survivor-centered approach when handling SEA issues.
- Participants apply the learnings from other project learning events: Feedback, complaints and response mechanism and internal reporting and investigation trainings.
- Participants activate referral pathway to effectively support an SEA victim/ survivor.

Participants

Partners' senior managers, PSEA/safeguarding/protection focal points, HR staff and MEAL staff at a minimum. Other administrative or program staff can be included depending on partners' specific structures and needs. The number of partners per PSEA simulation exercise is recommended to be limited to two organizations.

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Preparation checklist

Actions and processes to be completed prior to the simulation exercise									
Partners appoint SIMEX participants per required profiles (director, PSEA focal point, MEAL and HR)		Partners develop FCRM, IRIS and referral pathway SOPs		SIMEX management team appointed (simulation team leader and two scorers for each partner who are familiar with partner SOPs)		Participants consent to recorded sessions (session 3 and 4) to ensure scoring consistency		Adjustments made to general and specific project scenario per local context	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

Facilitation process

Session topic	Duration	Mode	Facilitation methodology	Materials/ handouts
Session 1: Introduction	30 min	Plenary	■ Welcome participants, address any technical issues and share simulation objectives. ■ Review tools and processes (SOPs, referral pathway, investigation plan, message forms included in HO 3 and HO 4, SIMEX materials). ■ Share the template of the message form and explain in detail how to fill it in. ■ Introduce simulation management team (simulation team leader and two scorers for each partner). ■ Share simulation process (introduce scorers and explain separate calls for each partner and alternative lines of communication, such as mobile phones). ■ Explain that scoring is done and will be shared at a later stage for easier identification of gaps and further recommendations for PSEA policies and procedures improvement. **CRS tasks:** **Simulation team leader:** ■ Ensures all participating partners have their FCRM, IRIS and referral pathway SOPs, and investigation plan template to hand. ■ Facilitates the session. ■ Assigns two scorers for each partner who are familiar with partner policies and procedures (FCRM, IRIS and referral pathways). ■ Scorers assist partners with separate MS Teams calls for each exercise – sessions 3 and 4.	SIMEX PowerPoint
Session 2: Pre-simulation planning	30 min	Plenary	■ Share background on the simulation scenario – Task 0. ■ Share the general emergency scenario (10 min). ■ Share the specific project scenario (10 min). ■ Share instructions for sessions 3 and 4. ■ Set up separate calls for each partner organization. ■ Announce call recording for sessions 3 and 4 for scoring consistency. ■ Allow time for questions. **CRS tasks:** ■ Simulation team leader shares background of the simulation scenario. ■ Simulation team leader shares the general emergency scenario in the chat box. ■ Simulation team leader shares the specific project scenario in the chat box. ■ Scorers set up individual calls on MS Teams for their allocated partner.	SIMEX PowerPoint Task 0: Scenarios Background HO 00 HO 1: General emergency scenario HO 2: Specific project scenario

Session topic	Duration	Mode	Facilitation methodology	Materials/ handouts
Session 3: Simulation exercise 1: Receiving SEA report as feedback via FCRM	1 hour	Plenary Separate MS Teams call for each part-ner	**Expected outputs:** ■ Document process for handling sensitive feedback: Receiving, recording, acknowledging, analyzing and responding, and ensuring the confidentiality and safety of all parties involved. ■ MEAL officer records SEA report as sensitive feedback and forwards it to the PSEA focal point or director using an incident report form or sensitive feedback form. ■ If forwarded to PSEA focal point, it is escalated immediately to the director. ■ Demonstrate separate handling procedure for sensitive feedback. ■ Escalate to senior leadership or PSEA focal point according to the adopted IRIS/escalation procedure. ■ Provide feedback about allegation and further steps to the reporter within 24 to 48 hours. **CRS tasks:** Simulation team leader joins each separate call for a period of time. Two scorers facilitate the session in separate calls for each partner: ■ Explain timekeeping (1 hour) and technical aspects of the session (submission of message form in electronic format to scorers through MS Teams messages or email). ■ Send the *HO 3: FCRM SEA complaint* to MEAL officer in a personal MS Teams message or email. ■ Note observations on score card of weak and good practices, areas for improvement, and means of verification for each output. ■ Focus on how participants address the confidentiality and safety of all parties involved in the incident scenario throughout the reports-handling process. ■ Receive message form and supporting documents (means of verification, or MOV) from assigned partner within one hour. ■ Answer any technical questions related to submission of the message form. ■ Announce a 15-minute break and Session 4 that follows.	HO 3: FCRM SEA complaint FCRM documents adopted by the organization (SOPs for FCRM, organizational chart, job descriptions, TORs, etc.) Score cards
Break	15 min		Allow participants to mute in separate calls for a 15-minute break. Ask everyone to send a message when they are back.	

Session topic	Duration	Mode	Facilitation methodology	Materials/ handouts
Session 4: **Handling SEA reports from staff** **Initiating investigation – Director** **Director takes immediate actions for victim/ survivor protection**	1 hour	Separate MS Teams call for each partner	**Handling SEA reports from staff:** **Expected outputs:** ■ Director shares the report with the PSEA focal point immediately and discusses the next steps during a separate MS Teams call. ■ Receiving, recording, acknowledging, analyzing and responding process is documented, ensuring the confidentiality and safety of all parties involved. **Initiating investigation – Director** **Expected outputs:** ■ Assigns staff to the investigation team that are not related to the case, not in a supervisory role to the alleged perpetrator, and are trained in investigations. The team is gender balanced and consists of at least two people. ■ Uses job descriptions, TORs and IRIS SOPs when filling posts. ■ Fills in/assigns staff to the response team to oversee the investigation. The response team is headed by the director and includes other admin, HR or programmatic staff not related to the case. **Director takes immediate actions for victim/survivor protection.** **Expected outputs:** ■ Together with HR person, decides on immediate actions to remove alleged perpetrator's access to program participants. ■ Activates referral pathway for immediate victim/survivor support.	HO 4: Staff SEA report Score cards Internal reporting and investigation documents adopted by the organization (SOPs for IRIS, organizational chart, job descriptions, TORs, etc.) Referral pathway documents for victim/survivor support

Session topic	Duration	Mode	Facilitation methodology	Materials/ handouts
Investigation team prepares for its upcoming activities			**Investigation team prepares for its upcoming activities** **Expected outputs:** ■ Develops investigation plan. **CRS tasks:** Simulation team leader joins each separate call for a period of time. Two scorers facilitate the session in separate calls for each partner: ■ Explain timekeeping (1 hour) and technical aspects of the session (submission of message form in electronic format to scorers through MS Teams messages or email). ■ Send *HO 4: Staff SEA report* from staff to the director in a personal MS Teams message or email. ■ Note observations on the score card of weak and good practices, areas for improvement, and means of verification for each output. ■ Focus on how participants address the confidentiality and safety of all parties involved in the incident throughout the reports-handling process. ■ Receive message form and supporting document (MOV) from their assigned partner within one hour. ■ Answer any technical questions related to submission of the message form. ■ Invite the participants to rejoin the main call for plenary.	Investigation plan template from IRIS training

Session topic	Duration	Mode	Facilitation methodology	Materials/ handouts
Session 5: Closing session and debriefing	45 min	Plenary	■ Distribute the participant feedback form electronically (online survey or Word document). Tell the participants to take 10 minutes to fill in their responses and share it back to the simulation CP team. ■ Invite participants to give their perspectives on what happened during the exercise. Allow time for discussion (35 minutes). Identify any critical issues when handling SEA reports. Brainstorm on the following: ▪ What worked well? ▪ What were the key challenges? ▪ What did you feel most confident about? ■ Ask each partner to propose action points for their identified gaps/challenges. Capture action points for each partner. Summarize the action points for each partner while encouraging clarification and agreement from each participant. **Key messages:** ■ Safe and confidential processes are vital when handling SEA reports. ■ Senior leadership has a particular role and responsibility in ensuring these processes are in place and known to all staff. ■ Functional referral pathways need to provide immediate and effective support to victim/survivors. **CRS tasks** ■ Simulation team leader facilitates the session and shares key messages on screen. ■ Simulation team leader creates online feedback form and shares link with all participants in the chat box or Word document. ■ Scorers capture key points from the brainstorming discussion for the partners they scored.	SIMEX PowerPoint Participant feedback form
SIMEX management team session	1 hour	Plenary in a separate CRS SIMEX MS Teams call	■ All scorers fill in any missing information on the score cards based on the message forms received. ■ All scorers share the score cards and message forms with the simulation team leader, simulation management team and MEAL team. ■ Team discusses the scores using the message forms and score cards, and reviews, comments on and gives average score for each partner per output. ■ Recordings of Session 3 and 4 can be used for verification of each output score. Team decides on the roles to provide SIMEX feedback, scores and recommendations to the partners in an accompaniment session.	

Tool 2 PSEA emergency simulation: Accompaniment resources

The resources below can be found on EFOM.

Materials

- Participant feedback form
- ST 1: Investigation plan template
- ST 2: Observers' instructions
- ST 3: Instructions for SIMEX team leader
- Simulation scorecard

Handouts

- HO 1: General emergency scenario
- HO 2: Specific project scenario
- HO 3: FCRM SEA complaint
- HO 4: Staff SEA report

PSEA emergency simulation PowerPoint

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