



Part I: Approach to Partner PSEA Capacity Strengthening

TIPS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR ORGANIZATIONS
SUPPORTING LOCAL PARTNERS TO ENHANCE PSEA

- PSEA CAPACITY STRENGTHENING MODALITIES OF SUPPORT
- IDEAL SEQUENCING FOR SUPPORTING PARTNERS IN PSEA ROLL-OUT
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- LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES FOR PSEA CAPACITY STRENGTHENING
- PSEA CAPACITY STRENGTHENING ACCOMPANIMENT TOOLS



Ongoing accompaniment and mentoring for partners is critical to the project's impact.

Photo by CRS staff

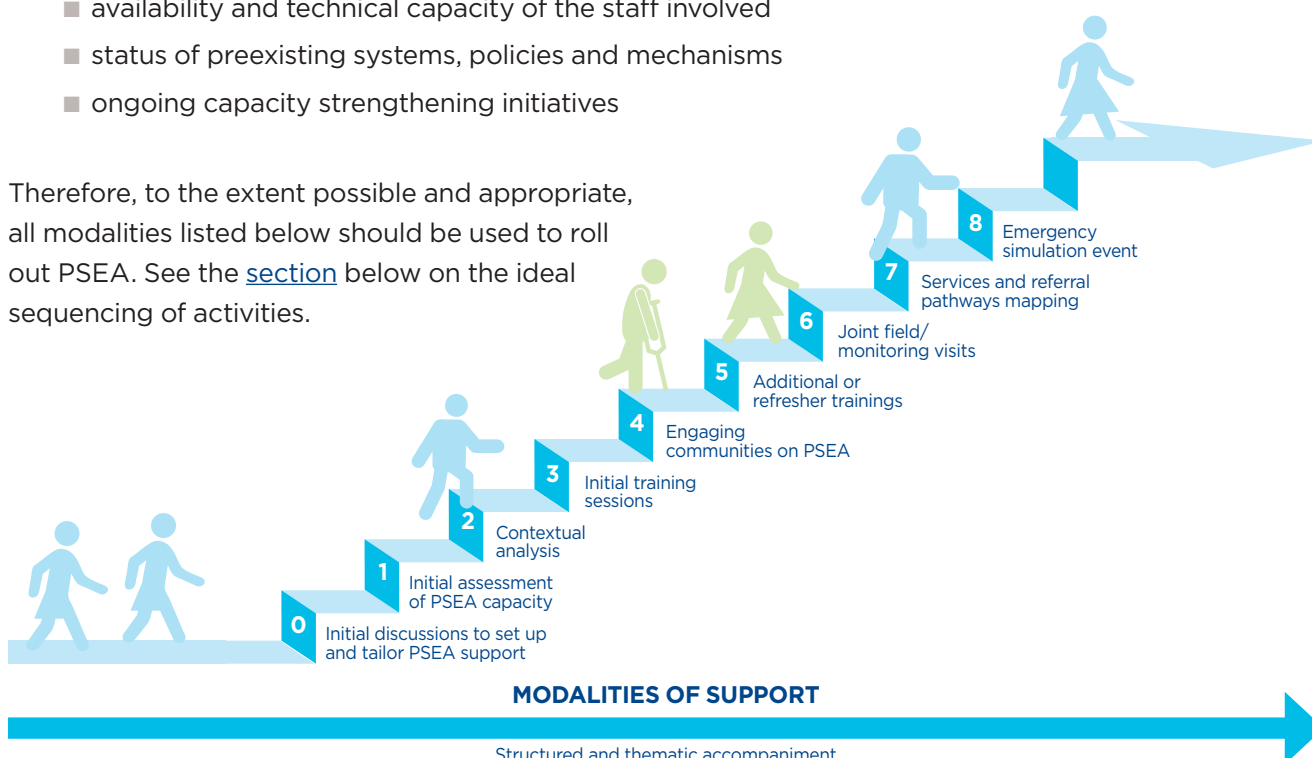
PSEA capacity strengthening modalities of support

CRS has used multiple approaches with partners to strengthen capacity, including a comprehensive capacity assessment, workshops to gain leadership buy-in, learning events on key project areas, and a PSEA simulation to test partners' outputs and project deliverables. Critical to the project's impact is ongoing accompaniment and mentoring for partners by CRS teams in country:

These **modalities of support** can be used to roll out PSEA with partner organizations depending on the:

- requests and identified needs of partner organizations
- availability and technical capacity of the staff involved
- status of preexisting systems, policies and mechanisms
- ongoing capacity strengthening initiatives


Therefore, to the extent possible and appropriate, all modalities listed below should be used to roll out PSEA. See the [section](#) below on the ideal sequencing of activities.



Modality of support	What
Preliminary step: Initial discussions to set up and tailor PSEA support	Initial discussions between NGO providing support and partner on what the PSEA support might look like, the best model for support, the partner's priorities on PSEA, and who will be taking the lead.
Initial assessment of PSEA capacity	Identification of partner organizational PSEA capacity, e.g., assessing what previous training/support was provided, what mechanism/systems related to PSEA are in place, etc.
Contextual analysis of legal framework and landscape related to PSEA and other related issues (i.e. gender-based violence, harassment, child protection, etc.)	Detailed analysis of the legal environment of the country regarding PSEA and related issues and mapping of actors, government and non-government, working on PSEA and related issues.
Introduction to PSEA workshop (senior management)	2-day workshop designed to sensitize partner's senior managers on PSEA and secure their commitment to the process.
HR writeshop	2-day workshop designed to assist partner organizations in developing PSEA/protection policies and procedures
↓ On-the-job support, accompaniment and mentoring on developing PSEA HR policies and measures	Accompaniment on developing PSEA HR processes on training, hiring and vetting, such as PSEA onboarding and training plan, safe recruitment policy, reference check process, updated job descriptions for staff and PSEA/safeguarding focal points, etc.
Introduction to feedback, complaints and response mechanism (FCRM)	3-day training designed to outline the basic steps for setting up or adjusting an FCRM and making it PSEA relevant.
↓ On-the-job support, accompaniment and mentoring to implement FCRM	Accompaniment to carry out community consultation on FCRM, and develop FCRM procedures such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) and protocols, feedback and complaints categories, FCRM flowchart, feedback and complaints registry/log process, staffing roles and responsibilities on FCRM, etc.
Introduction to Internal Reporting and Investigation System (IRIS)	5-day training designed to outline how to conduct fair, thorough and confidential investigations into complaints of staff misconduct, with a focus on SEA allegations.
↓ On-the-job support, accompaniment and mentoring on IRIS	Accompaniment to develop internal regulations, policies and procedures on Internal Reporting and Investigation System (IRIS), such as report-handling and escalation procedures, checklist and tools for managing investigations, IRIS roles and responsibilities.
PSEA training of trainers	5-day training designed as a refresher/advanced training for PSEA/safeguarding/protection focal points based on the IASC Minimum Operating Standards .
Engaging communities on PSEA	Accompaniment to develop information, education and communication materials and implement PSEA awareness-raising activities with communities based on the guidance, <i>Communicating with communities on PSEA</i> .
Refresher or additional training	Supplementary/remedial trainings as needed based on the outcomes of previous support provided. E.g., refresher workshop for senior management to assist them to ensure PSEA measures are implemented within their organizations, and to address ongoing challenges.
Joint field/monitoring visits	Joint field/monitoring visits to enable better understanding of context and operationalize PSEA strategies at the program level.
Mapping of services and referral pathways for SEA survivors	2-day workshop designed for partner organizations, government and key protection actors to network, become aware of each other's work, and update and develop the mapping of services and referral pathways for SEA survivors.
↓ On-the-job support, accompaniment and mentoring on mapping/referral	Support for developing mapping and referral of protection services for SEA survivors.
Emergency simulation event	1-day emergency simulation event to test key PSEA elements (FCRM, report-handling and basic investigation elements and referral) and make necessary adjustments.

Ideal sequencing for supporting partners in PSEA roll-out

Based on the pilot project, CRS proposes the following indicative sequencing for rolling out PSEA. These phases should be adjusted to the needs of the recipient organizations and the context, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is not always appropriate. Please note that the sequencing is presented as a trajectory, but in practice is more iterative or circular in nature:



Steps	Timing
0. Initial discussions to set up and tailor PSEA support	Month 0
1. Assessment of PSEA capacity	Month 1
2. Contextual analysis of legal framework and landscape related to PSEA and other related issues	Month 2
3. Initial training sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to PSEA • Training of trainers (ToT) • Feedback, complaints and response mechanism (FCRM) • Internal Reporting and Investigation System (IRIS) • Human resources • Etc. 	Months 2-12
3+ Accompaniment and on-the-job support and mentoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR • FCRM • IRIS • Any areas requested by partners 	Months 1-18
4. Engaging communities on PSEA	Months 15-18
5. Refresher or additional trainings	Months 12-18
6. Joint field/monitoring visits	Months 15
7. Mapping of services and referral pathways for SEA survivors	Months 15
8. Emergency simulation event	Months 18

Factors to consider when supporting partners on PSEA

There are many challenges, barriers and opportunities NGOs may encounter when supporting partners on PSEA. Based on the experience of the SPSEA project, a selection of recommended actions, to mitigate potential barriers and enhance opportunities across three key areas, are outlined below. All challenges and enabling factors apply at both the partner level and the supporting NGO level, unless otherwise specified.



Staffing

Staffing of the supporting NGO and the local actor is of paramount importance in this work (see Lessons Learned section below). Investing in the capacity of staff in the supporting NGO and within the partner organization can improve results and make progress more sustainable.

Challenges and barriers

- Aspects of PSEA can be quite technical, and capacities of staff can vary from organization to organization.
- Limited dedicated budget and staff time for capacity strengthening activities can be a barrier, both within the local organization, and the NGO wishing to support it.
- Staff turnover and transition can hinder progress made through partnership and capacity strengthening initiatives.

Enabling factors

- Staff do not need to have specific PSEA experience or expertise to add significant value to the process. Staff with any of the following skills and aptitudes can contribute to PSEA at different levels:
 - A range of useful skills/experience: gender sensitivity, investigations, social mobilization, communication with communities, project management, facilitation, policy development, working in partnership.
 - A range of useful aptitudes: interpersonal skills, good listening skills, empathy, ability to raise sensitive issues, integrity, critical thinking.

Recommendations

- Spend time onboarding and coaching staff involved in the project. Use a variety of methods, including e-learning, face-to-face learning, exchange visits, etc.
- Employ an iterative approach to build staff capability. Be realistic about what can be achieved in a short timeframe.
- Ensure multi-level accompaniment for PSEA roles and responsibilities, including from senior management of NGO to senior management of partner.
- Jointly develop and share clear terms of reference for staff involved, including an anticipated level of effort (LOE) for each staff member/focal point.



Organizational culture and leadership

Corporate culture and leadership present opportunities and barriers to strengthening PSEA in any organization. The organizational culture toward issues of gender, human rights for diverse groups, child protection and accountability to communities affected by crisis can enhance or impede PSEA goals. Power dynamics within an organization will also play a role. Active leadership is a huge factor: modeling behaviors, linking PSEA to organizational values, and making time to engage in PSEA efforts can demonstrate organizational and leadership commitment.

Challenges and barriers

- Partners faced multiple competing priorities during project implementation. As is common in the humanitarian sector, partner staff were managing large portfolios of work and often struggled to find time to move forward on PSEA commitments. Ongoing emergency responses, including COVID-19 responses, had to take precedence during the timeframe of the project, and interrupted some planned activities.
- As above, availability of senior leadership was also a challenge, as they juggled multiple priorities that did not always allow for active engagement.

Enabling factors

- Support and buy-in from senior management allowed partner staff to prioritize PSEA commitments and deliverables.
- Donor requirements for safeguarding/PSEA can assist partners to allocate time and resources.
- Religious statements on safeguarding/PSEA assisted partners to focus efforts on capacity-building objectives. For example, Vatican Statements and Caritas Internationalis enhanced safeguarding requirements added an additional incentive for Caritas partners to engage in the project.

Recommendations

- Invest time and resources to support a PSEA/safeguarding agenda.
- Identify champions within the partner organization to act as internal advocates and resources for other colleagues.
- Hold regular meetings between partner and NGO leadership for peer-to-peer communication on PSEA.
- Understand how much time is needed for accompaniment and plan work accordingly, jointly where possible.
- Be sensitive to partner availability and workloads; take a long-term approach to PSEA capacity building, where needed, to ensure local ownership and buy-in.



Tools and resources

Using tools and resources tailored toward local actors can help prevent or overcome misunderstandings around the process, goal and objectives.

Challenges and barriers

- Development of training material and guidance (NGO): Although many resources exist in the sector, at the start of the SPSEA project, it was not possible to find a full composite of resources targeted toward local and national humanitarian actors. As noted below, language and terminology can be exclusive and too technical to be accessible to actors beginning their PSEA work.
- Familiarity with PSEA terminology can be a challenge for any organization that is beginning work on PSEA. Without significant background knowledge, terminology can be complex, overly reliant on acronyms and inaccessible. Compounding the issue, terms may not have clear translations in local languages.

Enabling factors

- The availability of tools and materials in different languages, for example, the IASC Six Core Principles Relating to SEA, can help to prevent confusion on key terms and goals.
- Pre-determined core messages during accompaniment ensure all partners receive consistent technical support (NGO).

Recommendations

- Contextualize training materials, tools and practical resources.
- Invest in hiring a professional translator, with a background in gender, protection and PSEA, to translate from English into the local language.

Lessons learned and best practices for PSEA capacity strengthening

While further learning will be documented on project completion, the following is a summary of key learnings and promising practices for PSEA capacity strengthening. Further detail on each of these areas and other key learnings can be found in the following document: *Lessons Learned in Partner PSEA Capacity Strengthening** (CRS 2021):

* Please see *Lessons Learned in Partner PSEA Capacity Strengthening* (CRS 2021) in PSEA section of the [Emergency Field Operations Manual](#) (EFOM) to access this resource.

- Introduce PSEA to all levels of the organizations.** Introduce the PSEA capacity strengthening approach and maintain communication at all levels of the participating organizations to ensure awareness, buy-in and ownership. The engagement of relevant departments—such as human resources (HR) and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL)—across NGO and partners in PSEA-related training and accompaniment activities throughout the project ensures high-quality integration of PSEA in the organizations' policies and procedures.

In Indonesia, partner PSEA focal points came from diverse departments: senior management (secretary of directors, board of ethics, etc.), operational team (HR and legal, finance, etc.), and programmatic (program managers, MEAL, gender and/or protection point person). The intention was not only mitigating staff turnover but also engaging all levels of their organization in promoting and reinforcing PSEA principles.



- Invest greater effort to inform leadership attitudes on PSEA.** Although attitudes changed, partner staff expressed concern that the change was superficial, and that further work was needed to engage leaders by focusing on moral reasons for PSEA as well as in order to secure funding. It is also recommended that activities are targeted and tailored to partner leadership and staff separately considering the sensitivity of the topics and different needs in terms of learning and applying PSEA policies and procedures. Findings also showed that staff were uncomfortable discussing SEA in front of leadership.

Experience in the DRC and Haiti shows that a context-specific and culturally sensitive approach is required to get partner leadership on board. Initial introductions of the project to senior partner leadership by senior staff, such as the country representative, were well-received in all countries and helped to raise awareness of the importance of PSEA. This increases the awareness of PSEA at the senior level of the partner organization and also shows the wider partner staff that PSEA is taken seriously by their leadership.





When asked about what led to a change in leadership attitude, one partner staff member in Indonesia said: it was a combination of a carrot and a stick- “We encourage leadership by repeating how important PSEA is. We have to repeat it all the time and give examples of why it is serious and what can happen if we are not serious. But [leadership] also now sees [PSEA] is important because the donors ask about it and there is money connected to it. We have to do it because it is right, but also because we need funding.”¹

- **At least three to five years of support is needed for project learning, and for outcomes to be applied and sustainable.** Additional time allows for more in-depth learning and implementation of project objectives.



Partners consistently expressed in interviews² that they did not have enough time to fully roll out the project, or that they needed more time to absorb the content of what they were learning.

In the Philippines, there was a desire for more time focused on applying the concepts. One respondent said: “It took us a long time to [become] proficient in what we were doing so that the board would ratify [the policies].” Others were concerned about putting the work into practice once the project had ended and, despite feeling that they had developed good products, knew there was a lot to learn in implementation.

In interviews with staff from Haiti, the focus was more on the need to go deeper and more slowly to fully grasp the new concepts and apply the new knowledge and skills, rather than to go broader and focus on dissemination of knowledge and skills to more staff.

In the quantitative survey, most people focused on using the extra time to build out staff capacity, but a large portion also talked about going more slowly, either to have time to apply new skills or to allow change based on new skills.

1. Final evaluation of the Strengthening Partners in Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse project (CRS 2021). Due to the phasing within countries, this report focused only on Haiti, Indonesia and the Philippines.

2. Ibid.

- **Plan for dedicated staff time of both partner focal points and NGO staff.** One full level of effort (LOE) NGO staff member is recommended to support three to five partners, depending on their size, structure and existing capacity. Factor in costs for partners to apply the learning, as most do not have flexible funding sources.

Many of the focal points interviewed expressed concerns about the level of effort required from them in relation to their expectations earlier in the project. One respondent in the Philippines said of their role that “it’s a lot of work ... it’s more than you think.”³



- **Consistent and targeted accompaniment.** Accompaniment sessions can focus on a specific topic for which partners receive support to develop their outputs. Document the progress, challenges and required follow-up in a report for the partner. Outputs can also be linked to a small disbursement of funds upon completion of project deliverables.

CRS’ accompaniment activities in the Philippines were structured around the project’s intermediate results (IR) and tailored to partners based on the outcomes of their individual SEA capacity assessment. Each accompaniment activity had a clear purpose, linked to the project’s IRs, that was documented and shared with the partners ahead of the session.



- **Cluster partner accompaniment sessions to encourage cross-organizational learning and motivation.** Clustered accompaniment sessions encourage the exchange of successes, challenges and progress, while creating healthy competition between peer organizations.

Clustering was done geographically in the Philippines, which was efficient for the CRS team considering the resource limitations of this project. Three clusters were formed, which significantly reduced the time and costs for travel to partners. It was also appreciated by partners as they were clustered with organizations that work in the same context, speak the same language and have similar cultures. In Indonesia, clustering was based on the type and level of experience of the organization.



- **NGO participatory approach and equitable partner relationships facilitated learning and efficiency in application.** Partners expressed appreciation for the team’s technical skills, communication style and flexibility, and reported that the approach to capacity building was key to the project’s success.

3. Ibid.

PSEA capacity strengthening accompaniment tools

CRS project teams have developed these accompaniment tools structured around the key elements of the project. Please see the PSEA section of the CRS [Emergency Field Operations Manual](#) (EFOM) to access this resource.