



Part III:

Program Implementation Tools

- COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES ON PSEA
- DEVELOPING PSEA HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND MEASURES
- DEVELOPING A REFERRAL PATHWAY FOR ESSENTIAL PROTECTION SERVICES
- FEEDBACK, COMPLAINTS AND RESPONSE MECHANISMS (FCRM) AND PSEA
- RESPONDING TO SEA REPORTS (IRIS)

Communicating with Communities on PSEA



Tools

- Tool 1: Core PSEA messages for community members
- Tool 2: How to develop a PSEA communication plan
- Tool 3: Example PSEA information-sharing plan
- Tool 4: Communication methods for sharing PSEA information
- Tool 5: Context-appropriate PSEA information, education and communications materials
- Tool 6: Community dialogue on PSEA (including example questionnaire)

Audience



PSEA/safeguarding/
protection
focal points



Program
staff

Introduction

Communicating with Communities on PSEA recommends tools and approaches for engaging communities on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), with the aim of introducing it in a way that is non-threatening, accessible to all groups (e.g. children, people with disabilities), and contextually and culturally appropriate in tackling taboos or stigma related to PSEA.

This guidance draws on recognized international standards and good practice from the CRS SPSEA project.

Who?

This guidance is geared toward national and local organizations.

It may be of use to program teams working with community members through provincial and municipal leaders and community groups and platforms, such as community health workers, care groups and other community committees.

It can also be useful for senior managers, managers with responsibility for PSEA/safeguarding, and communication teams.

Why?

Engaging communities and communicating PSEA-relevant information is one of the key PSEA measures and one of the eight Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), considered the most widely used international PSEA standards.

Organizations need to ensure that the communities they work with can access timely, relevant, appropriate and context-specific information about expected and prohibited staff behavior and the organizations' measures and systems that address SEA by aid workers.

Context

Why?

Discussion about sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) may be uncommon in communities where there is sensitivity around such issues. Yet, PSEA awareness-raising is fundamental to preventing staff from causing harm and to enabling an organization to respond to allegations of misconduct. It will increase community awareness of issues of gender-based violence (GBV) and promote collective responsibility toward PSEA among aid actors in the community. Effectively communicating requires a sound understanding of the community and its context.

Raising awareness of PSEA is fundamental to preventing staff from causing harm and to enabling an organization to respond to allegations of misconduct

When?

Ideally, a context analysis is conducted during the design phase; however, it can be conducted at any point in the program cycle, and updated throughout the project following any changes in context.

What?

It is important to understand and map out:

- Current norms and values
- Gender dynamics, views and practices around GBV, and misconduct relating to SEA
- Barriers and cultural, traditional and religious biases that relate to how SEA may be perceived in the community
- The shame, stigma and fear of reprisal that could result should a person disclose abuse

In-country protection clusters, PSEA working groups, and other protection lead actors can be contacted to see whether SEA-specific information has already been gathered and analyzed. Also, check whether communities have been consulted to ensure they are not asked the same questions, leading to fatigue.

Messages and Methods

Why?

Program participants and community members have a right to access and receive information. Providing consistent, accurate and clear PSEA messages to the community is critical. At a minimum, program participants and community members should understand:

- That aid is always free and should never be exchanged for sexual, financial, social or political gain.
- That the organization has zero tolerance for inaction on SEA.
- What is expected or prohibited behavior among aid workers.
- How to report inappropriate behavior.

Providing consistent, accurate and clear PSEA messages to the community is critical

When?

Organizations should develop PSEA messages and a communication strategy at the design stage of a program and review it periodically:

- Before key activities begin, such as the targeting, selection and registration of program participants. It is vital to include PSEA messaging in the information package that program participants receive (i.e. selection criteria, details of assistance and services available).
- Before making changes to the program.
- Upon identifying new SEA risks.
- To monitor their results and impact.

How?

Organizations should develop and adjust PSEA communication plans and material to the context and target audience, and involve as many stakeholders as possible. This will help ensure that messages are appropriate, sensitive and likely to effectively communicate key information. Please see the examples of PSEA information, education and communications (IEC) materials in [Tool 5](#). Organizations can deliver these important messages by:

- **Summarizing key messages** from PSEA international standards and organizational policies that communities need to know ([Tool 1](#)).
- **Deciding how to communicate these key messages** to the community in a way that is relevant, accessible, sensitive and culturally appropriate ([Tool 2](#) and [Tool 3](#)).
- **Using existing communication materials as templates** for tailored materials ([Tool 4](#) and [Tool 5](#)).

Suggested tools	
Tool 1	Core PSEA messages for community members
Tool 2	How to develop a PSEA communication plan
Tool 3	Example PSEA information-sharing plan
Tool 4	Communication methods for sharing PSEA information
Tool 5	Context-appropriate PSEA information, education and communications materials

Engagement with Communities

Why?

An active, inclusive and regular dialogue with community members is key to increasing awareness of SEA risks, and ensuring the rights of program participants and community members to receive assistance without the risk of SEA.

Initiating and leading a discussion with community members on PSEA can be difficult and intimidating. Organizations need to build trust, enable two-way communication with the community around all PSEA issues and use engagement tools to ensure active inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially those at risk of SEA. It is vital to ensure that staff have the right background and skills to lead these discussions.

Organizations need to build trust to enable two-way communication with the community around all PSEA issues

When?

Communication and community engagement around PSEA should be high on the agenda of all aid actors at every stage of the program cycle:

- **Early interaction** with communities, such as during needs assessments or risk analyses, and throughout implementation of activities, enables organizations to collect and share relevant PSEA information and engage communities in a meaningful dialogue around PSEA. Such communication should take place before key activities begin, such as the targeting, selection and registration of program participants. It is vital to include PSEA messaging in the information package that program participants receive (i.e. selection criteria, details of assistance and services available).
- **Any interaction** with the community (community meeting, project start-up session, etc.) is an opportunity for organizations to share information about their PSEA policies and systems, and also to seek feedback from the community on how to best design and adapt them (e.g. through focus group discussions, key informant interviews and monitoring visits). This is particularly important when setting up feedback, complaint and response mechanisms (FCRM), designing PSEA communication materials, and defining referral pathways. It is also important to keep the community up to date on any actions taken as a result of complaints (while adhering to confidentiality protocols).
- **Before making changes** to the program.
- **Upon identifying new risks** related to SEA.

PSEA should be part of a wider engagement strategy with communities. Organizations should keep dialogue on PSEA with communities open throughout the program.

How?

A range of participatory approaches can be used to ensure active and inclusive community dialogue on PSEA:



Focus group discussions

Consider holding separate group conversations with those with specific needs and at risk of SEA.



Key informant interviews

Consider holding separate meetings with those with specific needs and at risk of SEA.



Outlines and facilitator guides

to lead community dialogue.



Role plays

Role plays provide an engaging, creative and memorable forum to involve community members.



Child-friendly and appropriate consultations

with support from child protection actors and stakeholders.

It may be helpful to discuss this first with the protection/PSEA network to check whether similar consultations have already been held and, if not, to ensure the approach chosen is appropriate and safe.

Suggested tool

Tool 6

Community dialogue on PSEA (including example questionnaire)

Tool 1 Core PSEA messages for community members

This tool is based on [Minimum Operating Standards: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Own Personnel](#) (IASC 2012).

Overview	
Purpose	PSEA is a complicated and sensitive topic. This tool summarizes key PSEA messages that program participants and community members should know. It also aims to simplify key messages and make them more accessible.
When to use it	At the start of the project, to develop communication materials and/or brief new staff.
Who to involve	Program teams or field staff, HR staff, communication teams (when available).

What key minimum PSEA information should communities expect?

At a minimum, program participants and community members should expect the following information from the organization and staff:

- **Aid is always free** – Communities have the right to humanitarian assistance without being subjected to SEA. Aid should never be given in exchange for sexual, financial, social or political gain.
- **Definition of SEA** – See below.
- **Standards of conduct for aid workers** (staff, volunteers and associates, such as contractors) according to organizational safeguarding policies (e.g. CRS [Safeguarding Policy](#)), including expected and prohibited conduct.
- **How and where to report complaints** – To report any issues or concerns related to staff misconduct, including sexual abuse, information should include:
 - The right of community members to give feedback or make complaints. Doing so will not negatively affect their access to humanitarian assistance or project participation.
 - The available reporting channels, e.g. contact number, email of safeguarding or PSEA focal points.
 - The steps that the organization will take to ensure the safety, confidentiality and dignity of complainants, including how complaints will be handled.
 - The expected timeframes, for example, when people using reporting mechanisms can expect a response to their complaint.
 - The roles and responsibilities of those involved and potential limitations (such as limits to confidentiality when protection is at stake).
- **Referral** – What services are available to support people who have experienced harm, and how to access them.
- **Organizational responsibility** – All actors have an obligation to prevent and address such acts, and protect witnesses, victims and survivors.

Definition: What constitutes sexual exploitation and abuse¹

Sexual abuse – An actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. For example, a local NGO worker touches a 6-year-old girl inappropriately while playing with her as part of a psychosocial intervention.

Sexual exploitation – Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. For example:

- A head teacher employed by an NGO at a school refuses to allow a displaced child to enter the school unless the child's mother has sexual intercourse with him.
- A driver for an international agency offers village schoolboys rides to their school in a neighboring town in an official vehicle, in exchange for him taking photographs of them posing naked.
- Soliciting a prostitute.

What conduct is expected of aid workers?²

Six core principles

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.³
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior, is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefiting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, they must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Aid workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, and promotes the implementation of their organization's code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

1. This accepted SEA definition is found in: [Secretary-General's Bulletin: Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#). (United Nations 2003).

2. [IASC updated Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019](#) (Updated).

3. Depending on the context, refer to disciplinary measures other than termination of employment.

Example of key messages for ADULTS



- Humanitarian aid is free.
- All assistance provided by humanitarian organizations is based on needs.



- You have the right to be informed about the humanitarian services provided in your area and about the selection criteria.



- A complaints system has been set up at [insert name of cluster/organization/location]. Contact [insert contact details] for further support and advice about this. All complaints are kept confidential.
- If you feel that you have been harmed or discriminated against due to your gender, ethnicity, religion, age or political affiliations, or someone working for a humanitarian organization has asked you to do something that was inappropriate in return for services, please report this using [insert reporting mechanisms].
- You have the right to report any inappropriate behavior, exploitation or abuse by a humanitarian worker. If you have a concern about the conduct of an aid worker please report it to [insert reporting mechanisms]. You may be the only person speaking out, and the only person who can help the victim.
- All complaints will be received, processed and stored safely, and kept confidential. Your safety is our priority!



- Humanitarian organizations and their staff work on principles of humanity, impartiality and respect.
- You should never be asked to exchange sexual favors to obtain assistance, employment, goods or services.
- Abuse of power of any kind over local populations is prohibited.



- An aid worker must report any concerns or suspicions regarding sexual exploitation and abuse by a fellow worker, whether in the same organization or not.
- These rules apply to all individuals (UN or INGO staff, partners, consultants, contractors of UN or INGO).

Example of simplified messages for ADOLESCENTS



- Aid is always free. Aid workers should never ask you to give them anything, or to do anything, in return for their help.



- Everyone can offer their opinion on any aid or help they receive and on how it is carried out—no matter who you are, how old you are, where you come from, or what your beliefs are. Your views help [organization/s] to improve and make sure we provide the right goods and services for your community.



- Every person has the right to be safe from harm and abuse—no matter who you are, how old you are, where you come from, or what your beliefs are. If you are worried about the well-being or safety of a child or have seen or heard of an aid worker acting improperly, you must report this to [insert reporting mechanisms]. You may be the only person with this information, and the only one who can help keep the child safe.
- All organizations must provide help and support safely and properly to every person they work with, treating them with dignity and respect. If you are worried about how organizations are carrying out their work in your community or how a humanitarian worker is behaving, you should report this to [insert reporting mechanisms].
- We will respond, listen and act on what you tell us. We will always investigate any abuse that you report to us and make sure that those who are harming you are held to account. We will tell you as much as it is safe to share and keep you informed when we can of the process.



- Aid workers must always treat you fairly and kindly, with dignity and respect, no matter who you are. If an aid worker has hurt you, upset you or asked you for anything in return for their help, please report this to [insert reporting mechanisms].



- All complaints will be received, processed and stored safely, and kept confidential. Your safety is our priority!

COVID-19 and SEA: Examples of messages

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacts all our lives. Because of physical distancing measures, you may no longer have access to adults you trust, or safe places to go. If you are



Aid is always free!

No one has the right to ask you for anything in exchange for the services that aid workers are giving you. This includes food, water, schoolbooks, games – everything! Please tell your friends!



Simplified PSEA messages for children



Aid workers should make you feel happy and safe. They should always treat you with kindness, respect and dignity.



Aid workers should never hurt you, shout at you, touch you somewhere you don't like, make you feel sad, or ask you to keep something a secret.



We will always listen!

Tell us if someone who works with us or any other aid worker hurts you, makes you feel sad or bad, or touches you in a way that you do not like. Do not blame yourself. It is not your fault! Tell us and we will help you. Keeping you safe is what matters the most to us! Tell your friends!

concerned that a member of your community is at risk of harm, you should contact [insert reporting mechanisms].

- Masks, gloves, soap and alcohol gel might be distributed to you by an aid worker to protect you from COVID-19. These are free and must never be offered in return for sexual or financial favors. If someone is asking you to do something in return for these items, you should report this to [insert reporting mechanisms].
- We are all spending more time online talking with friends, working or schooling. If you see something that upsets you or someone asks you to do something you do not want to do, you should report this to [insert reporting mechanisms].
- We all need to keep each other safe and try to stop the spread of COVID-19. If you come into contact with others, make sure you are 2 meters apart, avoid touching each other, and cough into your elbow.

Tool 2 How to develop a PSEA communication plan

Adapted from *Communication Toolbox: Practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with participants and community members* (CRS 2013).

Overview	
Purpose	Key steps to develop an appropriate and culturally sensitive PSEA communication plan.
When to use it	At the start of the project/program.
Who to involve	Program teams, communication teams (when available).

Step 1: Identify your objectives (why)

Use these questions to help identify your objectives:

- What is the purpose for communicating key PSEA messages? What do you want to accomplish?
- Why is it important for program participants to understand their rights and entitlements on PSEA?
- How does having accurate and timely PSEA information enhance the safety, dignity and access of program participants?
- Which geographic areas or communities do you want to receive your PSEA messages? Are there any sensitivities in these areas that need to be considered before adapting and sharing PSEA messages?

Step 2: Choose your target audiences (who)

- Understand the audience(s):
 - What is the gender, age, disability status, language, literacy level and ethnicity of your target population?
 - How do diverse groups in communities share and receive information they trust?
 - Who is trusted in the community and can share your message with diverse groups (those within the community who are respected and listened to, e.g. community elders, religious leaders, teachers, health care professionals), and who can safely travel to deliver the messages?
 - Who is the most at risk of SEA?
- Target all community members. Information-sharing on PSEA should be adapted and target all community members so that everyone knows details about PSEA. Don't rely on powerful community members alone to spread the messages.
- Diverse groups⁴ will have different communication needs:
 - Consider how those who are illiterate or live in communities where written communication is not the main form of communication, or those living with disabilities, can access PSEA messages.
 - Use different communication methods (written, oral and pictorial) to reach different groups, such as young children, older people, people with disabilities, illiterate or marginalized groups, etc. Whenever possible, use accessible formats (braille and large print, sign language, video, audio recordings, voice-overs and captions).

4. "Diverse groups" may refer to, for example, women, men, girls, boys, youth, older people, people with disabilities, as well as specific minority or ethnic groups without any such distinction ([Core Humanitarian Standard](#)).

Step 3: Design your key PSEA messages (what)

- Ensure that you consult communities and diverse groups, as they may have their own ways to describe harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect. They may use signs, symbols or expressions that suggest they are concerned. Your messaging should therefore reflect these.
- Use the questions below to help design appropriate and context-specific PSEA messages:
 - What are the key PSEA messages you want to communicate to each audience?
 - What programs is the organization implementing, what risks might they create, and what information is needed to counter these?
 - What PSEA-related questions do community members ask staff during field visits?
 - What do community members need to understand for zero tolerance for SEA to be achieved?
 - What would you want to know about staff behavior, especially of a sexual nature, if you were a community member?
 - How do communities describe harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect?
 - Given the context, is there any information that should not be shared or shared in a different way to minimize risks (i.e. safety and security risks)?
 - If there is an SEA concern raised and the victim needs immediate support, where would communities want to refer them?
 - How do communities encourage people to speak up?
- Reach out to PSEA/protection networks and colleagues to understand whether community consultations have already been held, to ensure potentially sensitive conversations are not duplicated.

Step 4: Identify your communication methods (how)

- Identify ongoing activities in the targeted community that can present a point of entry for raising awareness on PSEA:
 - What planned program activities could be used to deliver messages? For example, if the program includes food and nonfood items distribution, consider delivering PSEA leaflets within the food package or kit, or using small theater groups to perform an item on PSEA while people queue.
 - What communication channels are present in the community? For example, do people rely on radio programs, word of mouth from community leaders, or noticeboards? Is street theater used to share important messages?
- Analyze the efficiency of SEA outreach and awareness campaigns by other stakeholders (UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs) in the local context.
- Reach out to other PSEA or protection coordination networks and colleagues to see if materials have already been developed and to understand which methods worked well.

- Ensure accessibility, visibility and usability of PSEA information-sharing:
 - Information should be shared in a range of formats, languages and media. Provide one version in a written format (e.g. posters, leaflets, SMS); one that is verbal (e.g. megaphones, information desks, outreach worker visits, theater, community meetings, door-to-door community mobilizers); and one that is pictorial for children or those who cannot read and write (e.g. poster, video, cartoons).
 - Information can either be static or mobile (e.g. using megaphones or mobile notice boards).
 - Providing information at a central point (e.g. marketplace) can increase the number of people reached. Ensure those with mobility difficulties can also access the information.
- Ensure that PSEA information-sharing is sensitive and culturally appropriate.
 - Reflect on initial analysis of norms, values, gender dynamics and views/stigma around SEA. See *Context* section above.
 - For instance, make sure that the wording is context-sensitive, and images used are appropriate. Being overly explicit in your language and/or images has the potential to cause distress both to those viewing the materials and SEA survivors. Understanding euphemisms used for sensitive terms in the local language is vital. Translators Without Borders (TWB) can help with translation of difficult PSEA and safeguarding concepts and terms. Ensure PSEA information sharing is community-led:
 - Ensure you have representatives from a range of demographics, including government stakeholders, to help design the communication plan and co-create PSEA messaging. If necessary, work with your MEAL team and protection colleagues (including protection cluster and working groups, when available) to reach out and consult community groups (e.g. women's groups).
 - Consider asking community members to design communications materials, as they are best placed to create something that will be understood in the community. For example, you could ask children to design posters.
 - Identify focal persons and committees (e.g. local committees, groups) who can take an active role in raising awareness and providing feedback, but ensure you do not overburden community members with tasks, and that you have the required resources in place to respond to any PSEA concerns.
- Ensure you check any unintended outcomes of the communication, and mitigate against any risks. Do the selected methods pose any risks to staff or community members? Make sure you always consider the safety of those delivering the message so that you don't put them at risk of harm or retaliation.

[Translators Without Borders Glossaries](#), including protection- and COVID-19-related terms, are available in many languages.

See also [Tool 4: Communication methods for sharing PSEA information](#).

Step 5: Establish your time frame (when)

- At all stages of the project, and even in the early stages of a response, basic PSEA information should be shared with affected populations to help them understand what behavior is expected of staff and how to report a concern.
- Work with MEAL teams throughout the program cycle to monitor whether information is reaching targeted audiences and is understood. PSEA messages can be conveyed and monitored at all occasions of interaction with the community: meetings, distributions, monitoring visits, evaluations, etc.

Step 6: Draft a budget

- How much do you expect your plan to cost? What is your budget? Many methods are inexpensive, such as sharing information at community meetings, creating simple posters and working with community committees.
- How can the organization reach the widest cross section of the community with the available budget?
- Can costs be integrated into program budgets as they are developed?

Step 7: Implement the plan

- Before launching the communication plan, test the messages with a variety of stakeholders—including marginalized groups, as well as children—to ensure that the messages are culturally and age appropriate, and modify them accordingly.
- You may need to use a variety of activities to roll out your PSEA communication plan: one-off, periodic or ongoing.
- Consider the order in which different groups of people will need to know information. Be sure to train staff, volunteers and associates on PSEA before informing community leaders, other community groups and the wider community. It is also worth practicing or role playing delivering the messages and answering challenging questions they anticipate.
- Determine whether specific target groups need to be informed before others, i.e. those most at risk, community leaders, etc.
- Consider who will be responsible for:
 - Managing the communication plan and sustaining the approach.
 - Developing communication materials.
 - Sharing messages with communities and gathering feedback, communicating with other stakeholders (e.g., government departments, local NGOs and international NGOs) and reviewing whether the communication approach is effective.

Step 8: Monitor the results and look for ways to improve

- Review your communication plan during and after its implementation. Look for ways to improve, and discard those elements of the plan that didn't work in practice. Asking some of these questions can be useful:
 - Did people receive our PSEA message? Did they understand the key messages? How did they respond?
 - Are we aiming at the right audiences? Are we reaching them?
- Before implementing the plan, decide how and when to review the plan and agree on:
 - Which methods you will use to decide whether each communication approach has been effective. This can include field visits, community meetings, formal and informal KIIs and FGDs with staff and community members, surveys, etc.
 - Who will be responsible for developing the review criteria and making the review happen.
- The following elements can be used to review whether the PSEA communication approach is effective:
 - Community members receive information so they understand what they can expect in terms of staff behavior. *Have communities received information on what is appropriate staff behavior and what is inappropriate staff behavior? Do they know how to report inappropriate behavior?*
 - A range of communication methods, appropriate to the context and target audience, are used. The information is presented in a culturally appropriate way, in different formats (e.g. written, oral, pictorial), and in the local language so that it can reach the most marginalized.
 - There is evidence that all target groups are receiving accurate information in a timely manner and that they understand the language and wording that staff and communication materials use. *Is accurate and timely information about PSEA shared with communities?*

Tool 3 Example PSEA information-sharing plan

Adapted from *Information sharing template* (Caritas Internationalis 2018).

Overview	
Purpose	This tool provides an example of what PSEA information needs to be shared with diverse groups.
When to use it	At the start of the project .
Who to involve	Program teams/field staff, HR staff, communication teams (when available).

WHAT PSEA information will be shared?	WHO are you trying to reach with this information?	HOW will you reach different groups? What method will be used?*	WHERE will you share the information?	WHEN will you share the information with different groups in each area?
Standards of conduct for aid workers What is acceptable and unacceptable conduct	Mothers with young children	Community meetings	Communities X and Y	Mon (am), Wed (pm), Fri (am)
	Adult men and women	Radio debates	District X and Y	Weekly for 2 months
	Youth (boys and girls)	Community festival/events (drama and posters)	Communities X and Y	Aug 5 and 11
	Older men and women	Church or mosque announcements	Community Y	Twice daily from Aug 1 to 5
Complaint How to report any issues or concerns related to staff misconduct, including sexual abuse, and/or make a complaint	Youth (boys and girls)	Schools groups (posters, IEC materials)	Schools A, B and C	Every Thursday
	Specific minority or ethnic groups	Door to door	Communities X and Y	Mon and Tues (all day)
	Older men or women with disabilities	Door to door	Communities X and Y	Mon and Tues (all day)
	Women and girls	Face to face at water points	Water points X, Y and Z	Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

* See also [Tool 4: Communication methods for sharing PSEA information](#).

Tool 4 Communication methods for sharing PSEA information

Adapted from *Raising PSEA awareness amongst affected population: Best practices for Central Rakhine state*, PSEA Working Group, Sittwe, Rakhine State, December 2018.

Overview	
Purpose	This tool proposes a range of communication methods to tailor PSEA information to the context and target audience.
When to use it	At the start of the project/program and/or when designing a PSEA information plan/strategy.
Who to involve	Program teams, communication teams (when available).

Diversifying communication methods and incorporating PSEA messaging into as many relevant platforms as possible is highly recommended in order to:

- Ensure that we are reaching as many people as possible.
- Reflect the diverse needs of diverse groups, e.g. people with disabilities, mothers with children, older people.
- Reflect the language barriers and literacy levels of the targeted communities.

For the pros and cons of each communication method, and recommendations, see the table on the following page.

Method	Pros	Cons	Recommendations
Focus group discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opportunity for dialogue to address questions and clarify doubts ■ Can be adapted for the audience (e.g. adopting child-friendly approaches) ■ Good for people with mobility concerns (such as those in remote locations, older people and PWDs) ■ May generate more sensitive complaints than other approaches ■ Useful in communities with low literacy ■ Medium staffing and resource costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participants might not be comfortable speaking up in a group setting ■ Risk that survivors or perpetrators may be publicly identified ■ Not suitable for anonymous or confidential SEA complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train facilitators to create a comfortable and confidential environment in a private space ■ Ensure facilitators and participants are aware of the confidentiality requirements and its limits ■ Ensure staff have adequate facilitation and interpersonal skills ■ Set clear rules to ensure that survivor or perpetrator identification is not done in a group setting ■ Have separate FGDs for women, men, boys, girls, and male and female adolescents with male/female staff leaders ■ Train facilitators on when, whether and how to refer SEA cases (from staff from own organization and external staff) and have referral pathways available ■ Ensure in-person follow-up visits a few days after the FGD
Open community meetings / community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Able to raise awareness among more people in less time ■ May engage non-program participants ■ Useful in communities with low literacy ■ Can be adapted for the audience (e.g. adopting child-friendly approaches) ■ Low staffing and resource costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not suitable for anonymous or confidential SEA complaints ■ May not be appropriate in more conservative environment ■ Discussions might be limited if certain people dominate the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure gender balance of staff ■ Set clear rules to ensure that survivor or perpetrator identification is not done in a group setting ■ Ensure staff have adequate facilitation and interpersonal skills
Door-to door visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May allow for more private and confidential conversation ■ Gives access to people with limited mobility ■ Provides opportunity for dialogue to address questions and clarify doubts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Could lead to loss of trust in program participants if perpetrator is involved in the visits ■ High staffing and resource costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure gender balance and diversity of staff to create more trust and address barriers (language, etc.) ■ Train staff on how to present the key messages in a non-threatening way, and in terms of privacy and confidentiality principles ■ Ensure staff know how to handle any reports or cases received during door-to-door visits ■ Ensure facilitators are aware of the confidentiality requirements and its limits

Method	Pros	Cons	Recommendations
Integration into existing program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May result in stronger understanding and acceptance of core messages ■ May provide opportunity for dialogue to address questions and clarify doubts ■ Can be adapted for the audience and context ■ Useful in communities with low literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May require more staff resources ■ Some staff may feel uncomfortable talking about PSEA or not consider it their responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure staff are adequately equipped and trained on safe programming and protection mainstreaming ■ Ensure staff take into consideration PSEA when designing and implementing program ■ Integrate key PSEA messages into existing programs and activities, i.e. include messaging into Child Friendly Space curriculum
Banners, posters, leaflets, community boards, videos, visibility material (t-shirts, notebooks, food packaging, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be seen at any time and serve as reminders ■ Can have a wide reach if placed in high-traffic areas ■ Low/medium staffing and resource costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Impersonal communication that may not generate trust ■ Does not reach illiterate or isolated populations ■ Graphics do not always convey the message with the necessary sensitivity ■ No opportunity to ask questions ■ No opportunity for anonymous or confidential SEA complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Involve community members throughout the process and test the messages to see if they understand what the images are trying to convey ■ Ensure that everyone is represented in images (e.g. children, women, men, older people, and people with disabilities) so that the entire community can relate to the message ■ Avoid using photographs of people as this can imply that those depicted are survivors of SEA, and can put the individual at risk of harm, retaliation and stigma ■ Avoid reinforcing stereotypes ■ Ensure that messages are placed in appropriate locations ■ Complement static messages with in-person sessions ■ Set up in communal spaces when available
Social media platforms (such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can have a wide reach if location has decent network coverage ■ Can manage anonymous/confidential SEA complaints if account used does not reflect personally identifiable information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can exclude many groups ■ Requires good network coverage, and access to smartphones or computers ■ Requires medium to high digital literacy to set up and use ■ Can generate a lot of feedback and questions, which can be overwhelming for staff to manage ■ Risk of online safeguarding issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Before use, conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure that we are not putting any one at risk of harm ■ Train staff and community members on platform chosen ■ Ensure there is a built-in or established reporting mechanism and inform users on how to report concerns

Method	Pros	Cons	Recommendations
Annual campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can create broad momentum ■ Can have a wide reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some staff may feel uncomfortable participating in a public campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tailor communications material to the audience. ■ Set it up in a communal space when available.
Direct conversation with trusted community leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can have a wide reach ■ Low/medium staffing and resource costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can exclude groups or individuals who may not feel comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spend time training the leaders on PSEA to ensure that they are able to convey the messages in a safe and respectful way
Radio show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can have a wide reach, especially where listening to the radio is universal ■ Useful in communities with low literacy ■ Could include two-way communication, if people can call in and ask questions ■ Can also be anonymous, which can be good for sensitive questions considered too embarrassing to ask in person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cannot reach people living with hearing impairments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tailor communication material to the audience ■ Ensure that your slot is at the most appropriate time of the day, when it is likely to be heard by your target audience. E.g. when children are at school, but not when women may leave the house to fetch water, or during prayer times.
Street theater/drama/music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engaging way of sharing information ■ Can have a wide reach ■ Can be adapted for the audience (e.g. child-friendly approach) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May not be appropriate in more conservative environment ■ Discussions might be limited if certain people dominate the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Involve community members in creating the content, and test messages with them ■ Ensure material is relevant to the context and appropriate to the target audience ■ Ensure translation into local languages

Tool 5 Context-appropriate PSEA IEC materials

Overview	
Purpose	This tool offers guidelines for assessing the communication landscape, and gives examples of information, education and communications (IEC) material developed by SPSEA project partners and other stakeholders for specific contexts.
When to use it	At the start of the project or program and/or when designing PSEA communication material
Who to involve	Program teams, communications teams (when available)

Examples of PSEA information, education and communications materials

1. General IEC materials

Posters, postcards and leaflets



THE PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING FRAMEWORK
prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of affected and at-risk communities; equality and inclusive participation; and the dignity of, and accountability to, all groups affected by crisis.

CORE COMPONENTS

ANALYSIS	TARGETING + DIVERSITY OF NEED	COORDINATION / ADVOCACY	TRAINING / REFERRAL	INFORMATION	CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT	FEEDBACK + COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS	STAFF CONDUCT
PARTICIPATION + EMPOWERMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY TO BENEFICIARIES	MEANINGFUL ACCESS	DO NO HARM (SAFETY + DIGNITY)				

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FEEDBACK + COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS
Men, women, boys and girls are able to provide feedback and report concerns in a safe, dignified and confidential manner, and receive an appropriate response when they do so.

PICTURED
In our response in the Kurdistan region of Northern Iraq, CRS created structures in which local communities could provide feedback on our programming. Community meetings, help desks and feedback boxes were a regular feature of projects, and a hotline allowed for anonymous and sensitive information.
Photo by Hawre Khaldi/Metrography for CRS



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PARTICIPATION + EMPOWERMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY TO BENEFICIARIES	MEANINGFUL ACCESS	DO NO HARM (SAFETY + DIGNITY)				

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

STAFF CONDUCT
Staff and partners have appropriate knowledge and organizational support to conduct themselves and their work in a safe and appropriate way.

PICTURED
In the Typhoon Haiyan response in the Philippines, CRS staff and affiliates received training in the CRS code of conduct to ensure beneficiaries were treated with dignity and respect, and to protect against abuse and exploitation.
Photo by Jim Stipe/CRS



FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED

You always have the right to feel safe and respected in a CRS classroom



It is **OK** for someone to give you a respectful compliment when you do well in class

It is **OK** to ask an adult you trust to be present if you need to talk to another adult one-on-one



It is **OK** for someone to listen to you if you have a concern

It is **OK** for you to say "no" if you don't want your photograph taken



It is **OK** for you to expect to feel safe and respected when you are in class

It is **NOT OK** for someone to shout at you

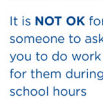


It is **NOT OK** for someone to hit or slap you

It is **NOT OK** for someone to touch you in any way that makes you feel uncomfortable



It is **NOT OK** for someone to call you rude names or swear in front of you



It is **NOT OK** for someone to ask you to do work for them during school hours

It is never your fault if you are touched, spoken to or treated in a negative way. If anyone treats you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, afraid or disrespected, talk to an adult you trust, such as a parent, your teacher, a shura member or a CRS staff member.

To get help, you can ask an adult to call 0729008888 or 0764008888.



CRS has been supporting community-based education since 2008. CRS is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that protects the unique needs of children.

HOW TO CONTACT CRS?



Question?

Request?

Complaint?

Feedback?



CALL-US---Toll-Free-Lines

CRS-Toll-Free-line: **0800-300256**---Languages-available: English

UNHCR-Toll-Free-line: **0800-323232**---Languages-available: All

Opening-hours: Monday-through-Friday, 8a.m.-to-1p.m.—2p.m.-to-5p.m.



TALK-TO-US

CRS-Staff, UNHCR, OPM-everyone-and-everywhere

Monday-through-Friday, 8a.m.-to-1p.m.-&-2p.m.-to-5p.m.

Languages-available: All



SHARE-WITH-US

Community-meetings-for-planning-and-information-with-CRS-staff,

UNHCR, OPM, Protection-Partners

Languages-available: All



SUGGEST-TO-US

Suggestion-boxes-at-CRS-field-offices-and-Reception-centers-for-privacy

CRS-MEAL-staff-to-open-suggestion-boxes-every-Thursday-afternoon

Languages-to-write-in: English



WRITE-TO-US

Letter-Forms-to-be-dropped-off-at-CRS-field-offices-during-office-hours

OR-placed-in-suggestion-boxes

Languages-to-write-in: English



RESPECT AND DIGNITY

CRS and Caritas staff are dedicated to providing all services related to cash programming at this site. In order for us to provide these services without disruption we need our staff members and residents to be safe and secure. If any staff member is threatened, in any way, they will be forced to evacuate the site and not be able to return until the organizations feel secured that the teams will be safe. This will mean delays in programming support at the site and possible delays in your cash grant for the following month.



- Treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Display patience, kindness, and understanding towards each other.



No acts of violence — verbal, psychological, or physical will be tolerated.



Residents and staff should immediately contact the police and evacuate when threatened in any way.

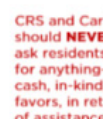


BE RESPECTFUL OF EACH OTHER'S TIME

Staff members will arrive on time and **MUST** leave on time without exception.



Make sure to seek assistance at least 30 minutes before the scheduled departure time.



CRS and Caritas should **NEVER** ask residents for anything—cash, in-kind, or favors, in return of assistance.



Residents should **NEVER** offer to any Caritas staff cash, in-kind, or favors for any reason.

For questions, reports, and complaints, please call the GCA HelpLine at **2103300170** or send a Viber message to the numbers below:

Viber (Messages only)	Arabic	Farsi, Dari, Pashto	French	Urdu, Panjabi, Hindi	Kurdish, Turkish, English
	+30 694 4514441	+30 694 0736099	+30 690 7793469	+30 690 9542761	+30 690 7793468



No acts of violence — verbal, psychological, or physical will be tolerated.

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Urdu, Panjabi, Hindi	+30 690 9542761
Kurdish, Turkish, English	+30 690 7793468



ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

**Perpetrators
will be punished**



We are doing everything possible to improve accountability and end sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers through strong prevention and response measures, centred on victims and survivors. We have improved our outreach, and the Victims' Rights Advocate and I myself make it a priority to meet survivors personally.



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
UN Secretary-General

ZERO TOLERANCE
FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE



Honouring our values

**STOP
SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION
AND
ABUSE**



TOGETHER WE STAND



**Together We Stand Against
Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

REPORT MISCONDUCT

MINUJUSTH Conduct & Discipline Team
Cell : 3702-6516
Ext : 6637
minujsth-cdt@un.org



Honouring our values

KIRARO- We want you safe & well!

If you experience violence, theft, or fighting at the household or community level, reach out to these supports for help.

Child Helpline Dial 116



- 1) LC1/Local leaders & protection committees
- 2) Police: 0772 698 772
- 3) CDO (Geneva): 0782 959 887
- 4) Probation Officers: 0772 610 133



**Don't sit with your problems alone,
seek help!**

CRS Toll Free Line: 0800 300 256



Child friendly IEC material

ADULTS MUST NEVER HURT YOU



NO EXPLOITATION



NO NEGLECT



NO PHYSICAL ABUSE



NO EMOTIONAL ABUSE



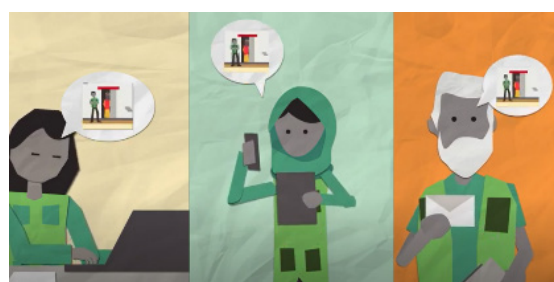
NO SEXUAL ABUSE

Videos

No excuse for abuse: Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian action

(InterAction, 2020)

Available in Arabic, English, French, Indonesian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog and Turkish



Victims of sexual exploitation and abuse rebuild their lives (United Nations, 2019)

- [English](#)
- [Swahili](#)



Jamilla: No Excuses Series - Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse

(Film Aid, 2006)



Responding to Disclosure of a GBV Incident

(Global Shelter Cluster, 2018)

Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish



More examples of materials can be found [here](#).

Translated IEC content

- [Plain-language version of the PSEA Principles translated into 100+ languages](#)
- [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019](#). Translated into [100+ languages](#).

Slogan

Zero Tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Tolérance zéro pour l'exploitation et les abus sexuels

Tolerancia cero a la explotación y abuso sexual

Tolerância zero para abuso e exploração sexuais

Uvumilivu sufuri kwa unyanyasaji na ukatili wa kingono

2. Country-specific IEC material

Philippines

In the Philippines, SPSEA project partner organizations translated the IASC's Six Core Principles into several local languages. They also incorporated information on feedback, complaints and response channels to encourage reporting of any suspicions or violations of SEA. These materials were used for community engagement in various emergency responses, particularly the churchwide Caritas Kindness Stations in response to COVID-19.

Pamphlet

Birhen sa Kota

This material was printed out and distributed during food aid delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These used local translations of the PSEA Six Core Principles and were contextualized with the use of local hotline numbers, contact persons and relevant reporting mechanisms.



Brochures and tarpaulins

Caritas Catarman

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the brochures were given to program participants at relief distributions, and the tarpaulins were displayed at parish-based Caritas Kindness Stations, where farmers and fisherpeople bring their produce.



Pamphlets and tarpaulins Caritas Masbate

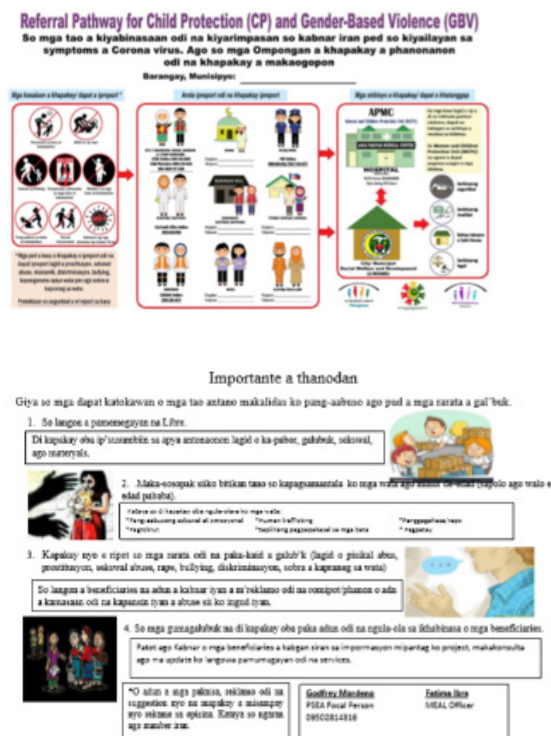
These pamphlets were given out during food distributions to indigenous communities affected by COVID-19. The tarpaulins were posted at parish-based Caritas Kindness Stations.



Pamphlets Duyog Marawi

The pamphlets were given out during food distributions in response to those affected by COVID-19, such as workers and tricycle drivers in Iligan City, and internally displaced people from the Marawi City armed conflict.

This was linked to the referral pathway of the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence (CP/GBV) Cluster of the province.



Comics UNICEF

This material was produced by UNICEF Philippines and widely circulated among the PSEA Task Force members.

The comic depicts SEA violations during a humanitarian response and how to report them to the authorities.



Indonesia

In Indonesia, SPSEA project partner Bina Swadaya shared materials used during the Jakarta flood response. Materials focused on feedback channels and how to access them, as well as how feedback—both sensitive and programmatic—will be handled.

Vertical banner

Bina Swadaya

The first banner offers community feedback channel guidance, and explains how to submit any kind of feedback to the organization through various channels: mobile phone, face-to-face consultation and suggestion box. It includes a detailed description of each channel and how to access it, and the community is encouraged to submit their feedback. It also explains how the organization maintains the confidentiality of community members who complain.

The second banner shows how the feedback will be processed. Colors were used to emphasize the feedback categories. It showed that sensitive feedback (including SEA-related), depicted in red, would be directly reported to the senior manager.



Leaflet

Bina Swadaya

This leaflet advertised a public discussion about social emergency responses and explained the organization's code of conduct and key PSEA messaging. The speakers included the emergency response team leader, human resources manager, PSEA focal point and program manager.

DRC

The following IEC materials were developed by CRS DRC to share information with community members and program participants on channels for reporting feedback and complaints related to CRS interventions and staff behavior, including SEA cases.

These materials are used by CRS DRC in its development and emergency projects across the country. They are displayed at CRS offices and project sites, and distributed to program participants and community members in CRS targeted areas.

<p>Flyer</p> <p>This flyer gives information to the community on how to report any concern related to CRS intervention and staff behavior, including SEA cases, using a CRS toll-free phone number.</p>	
<p>Poster</p> <p>This material was been developed for an education project to share with pupils how they could report abuse using a CRS toll-free phone number.</p>	<p>NUMELO YA KOBENGA EZALI YA OFELE</p>
<p>Poster</p> <p>This is part of a poster displayed in schools explaining to pupils how to share complaints through a protection focal point.</p>	
<p>Poster</p> <p>This is part of a poster displayed in schools explaining to pupils how to share complaints using a suggestion box, and how CRS would handle it and respond.</p>	<p>EBOMBELO YA MIKANDA</p>

Haiti

The following IEC materials were developed by the CRS Haiti country program to share information with stakeholders, community members, program participants and staff on communication channels for feedback and complaints during CRS interventions, and also illustrate unacceptable staff behavior. The materials are used by the CRS Haiti team during implementation of projects and are also displayed in all three offices and at project sites. They are shared during active engagement with community members and program participants.

Poster

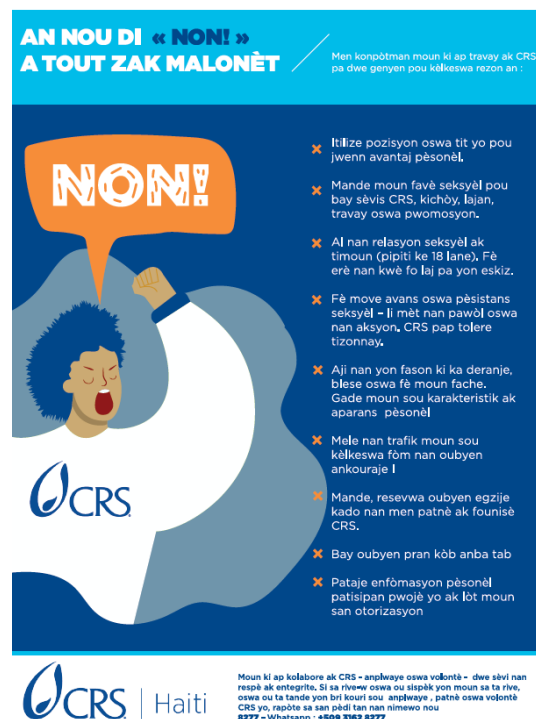
This is used for all projects implemented by CRS for engagement with local communities. The information on the hotline is shared with community members so that they understand how to share feedback.



Pale ak CRS pou w di si sa w panse de aktivite li yo. Nou la pou ede w rezoud tout difikilte ou rankontre ak pwojè nou yo.

Poster

This is used in communities where CRS implements projects to ensure program participants and community members know the behaviors that are NOT acceptable from CRS and partner staff.



Moun ki ap kolabore ak CRS - anplwaye oswa volontè - dwe sèvi nan respè ak entegrite. Si sa rive w oswa ou sipèk yon moun sa ta rive, oswa ou ta tande yon bri kouri sou anplwaye, patnè oswa volontè CRS yo, rapòte sa san pèdi tan nan nimewo nou 8277 - Whatsapp : +509 3162 8277

Poster

This is used in communities where CRS implements projects to ensure program participants and community members know the behaviors that are NOT acceptable from CRS and partner staff.

KIJAN CRS TRAVAY

ÒGANIZASYON CRS PWOMÈT OU KE

- Sèvis ak aktivite CRS yo GRATIS. Pèsanm pa gen dwa mande-w lajan, ni vann kò-w pou ou kapab benefisye.
- CRS pa chwazi moun parapò ak relijyon, relasyon ak kontak pèsanèl, oswa kan politik yo.
- CRS dwe asire li ke projè li yo byen fèt epi respèkte prensip nasyonal ak entansyon yo.
- CRS pap bay lòt òganizasyon enfòmasyon pèsanèl ou san ou pa dakò.
- CRS kanpe kont tout move zafè oswa zak fizik ak vyolans seksyèl.

KONPÒTMAN MOUN KI AP KOLABORE AK CRS DWE GENYEN NAN KOMINOTE YO POU SA, EKIP CRS AK LOT KOLABORATÈ LI YO

- Dwe trete tout moun nan kominote yo nan respè moun ak moun.
- Pa dwe nan relasyon seksyèl ak ti moun (ki poko genyen 18 lane), dapre sa lafwon nan pay-la di.
- Dwe pèmèt ou patisipe nan aktivite yo depi w reponn a lritè ki tabli yo.
- Dwe ba w bon jan enfòmasyon sou òganizasyon an ak aktivite ke li ap mennen yo.
- Pa dwe resevwa lajan ni okenn lòt byen ak sèvis nan men moun ki ap patisipe nan aktivite CRS sou baz sèvis ke yo ap ofri a.
- Pa dwe itilize byen CRS ak pozisyon yo pou bezwen pèsanèl.

KONPÒTMAN CRS AP ATANN DE KOMINOTE A

- Bay bon jan enfòmasyon nan aktivite CRS yo.
- Byen trete kolaboratè ak materyèl CRS yo.
- Sipòte nou nan garanti sekirite travay nou nan kominote yo.
- Patisipe kot a kot ak CRS nan aktivite pwojè yo pou nou realize objektif yo ansanm.
- Pale ak CRS pou fè konnen kisa w panse de aktivite li yo : sa ki bon oswa sa ki mal epi tou si nou pa kenbe pwomès nou. Sa ap ede nou amelyore sèvis nou yo.
- Fè nou konnen lè nou mal fè yon bagay oswa si yon kolaboratè nou genyen yon move konpòtmàn.

Si w santi ke nou pa kenbe pwomès nou, fè nou konnen sa Ou ka kominiye ak CRS nan nimewo sa yo

8277 +509 3162 8277

Poster

This was developed to highlight expected behavior of all Caritas staff as agents and representatives of the mission and vision of the institution. They are displayed in all 11 Caritas Haiti offices.

DIS KÒMANDMAN

KONT EKSPLOWATASYON AK ABI SEKSYÈL

Ou reprezante Caritas

Pou sa, w ap gen konpòtmàn ki respèkte prensip ak valè enstitisyon an:

- W ap montre ou se yon moun responsab, entèg epi ki gen etik, nan tout aksyon ou ak nan tout sa w ap di.
- W ap demontre Egalite, invèsalite, enpasyalite ak transparans an fas tout moun.
- Ou pap anvizaje fè zafè pa w ak lajan kila pou sèvis enstitisyon an.
- W ap bay enfòmasyon kòm sa dwa, a moun ki konsène nan aktivite Caritas yo.
- Ou pap itilize pouvwa w ak enfiyans ou pou fè okenn magouy.
- W ap evite tout deklarasyon ki ka denigre, ofanse, favorize yon moun oubyen you gwoup moun sou baz sèks, laj, nasyonalite, ran sosyal ak relijyon.
- W ap kwape tout asèlman, abi, neglijan ak eksplowatasyon sou moun, espesyalman sa ki pi vilnerab yo.
- Ou pap pran, ni ou pap bay okenn travay ki pa vo pri li.
- Ou pap mele nan okenn zak koripsyon.
- W ap kenbe diyite w ak lonè w tout tan e tout kote.

USAID CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES CARITAS AYITI HAITI

Tool 6 Community dialogue on PSEA

Overview	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides guidance on how to lead a discussion with the community on their perspectives of PSEA. ■ Captures perspectives on how the community would like to receive PSEA information.
When to use it	Either quite early in the project cycle to raise initial awareness of PSEA, or toward the midterm to assess how effective PSEA awareness-raising efforts have been.
Who to involve	Program team, MEAL team.

1. Dos and Don'ts of conducting PSEA FGDs*

Planning and setting up the FGDs and KIIs

Decide what you wish to say, who you wish to speak to, and how this may best be facilitated

Purpose and Preferences

Agree on the purpose of the discussion and explore preferences



- Capture community perspectives and level of PSEA understanding.
- Understand preferred, context-relevant information channels for PSEA messaging.
- Determine how to share PSEA messages that are context relevant and effective.
- Discuss key terms in advance and how these may be translated and understood across the different languages.

Protocols

Train staff to respond to SEA reports and collect data consistently



- Remind staff of the organization's protocols for responding to allegations or incidents of SEA, including confidentiality and exceptions to confidentiality.
- Be consistent: Aim to use the same data collection tools and methods in each community visited and record data consistently, to enable comparative analysis.
- If available, assign or train staff who can conduct psychological first aid if any immediate support is needed.

Participation

Create best conditions for wide and deep participation



- Give voice to all groups (i.e. older people, religious groups, ethnic minorities, people of different ages and genders) and those at the highest risk of SEA (e.g. women, children/adolescents and people with disabilities).
- Consider the diversity of the interviewers/data collectors (gender/ethnicity/language/age) so you can put participants at ease and promote open conversation. Consider having a female facilitator.
- Consider limiting group size to 10 or fewer to allow for more in-depth conversation, given the topic's sensitivity. Consider the ratio of staff to participants so facilitators are not overwhelmed and each participant receives attention.
- Include open questions, such as *Why? How? When?*

Don'ts



- Do not include too many closed questions, which lead to yes or no answers and may not provide much information. For example, ask: *"Can you tell me what behavior is expected of aid workers?"* rather than *"Did you know that expected behavior from aid workers is XYZ?"*
- Do not include leading questions that direct the group to answer in a particular way and limit the chance to hear the most open, important and unexpected feedback. Example of a leading question: *"Don't you think women are most at risk of SEA when they go to fetch water?"* Possible answers: Yes/No. Example of open-ended question on the same topic: *"When do you think women are most at risk of SEA?"*

*Based on guidance notes in:

- Protection Mainstreaming Working Group. 2018. *Protection Mainstreaming Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*.
- Global Protection Cluster. 2017. *Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit*.
- Caritas Australia. 2016. *Case Study Guidelines*.

Introducing the discussion

Welcome, make introductions and explain purpose, process, rights, concepts and terminology

Welcome and introduce



- Welcome participants and invite them to introduce themselves.
- Introduce facilitator and notetaker, including names, organization and positions.
- Introduce the topic. E.g. *"We want to hear whether you feel you are respected by aid workers. We want to know what you already know about aid workers' potential misconduct, for instance, of a sexual nature. We want to hear whether you think services are safe, and how you would like information related to SEA to be shared."*

Explain the process



Explain:

- Roles of facilitator, notetaker and participants.
- Expected duration of the discussion. Let the person/group know how long you expect the interview/discussion to last, and ensure they are happy to talk to you. Be respectful of people's time.
- Ground rules (e.g. mobile phones off).
- The way the discussion will be carried out and the topics that will be covered, emphasizing the importance of participants' honest responses.

Share purpose, rights and ethics



Explain, in the language understood by participants:

- The purpose of the data collection effort and the discussion, how the participants were selected for the discussion, and how the information gathered will be used.
- That there are no right or wrong answers.
- Participation is voluntary, and that they may refuse or withdraw, with no consequences. The answers they give will not affect whether they receive services.
- They are not expected to discuss individual incidents of violence and should never reveal any identifiable personal information such as the names of survivors or perpetrators.
- The team will take notes and some data about participants may be gathered, but will not be shared unless they agree.
- Should anyone have confidential concerns or complaints, these can be shared with the facilitator after the session.
- For children, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, a consent form can be shared days in advance for them to learn about their participation.

Confidentiality and its limits

Confidentiality will be respected within limits. Strict confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed due to the organization's moral and/or legal obligation to report and investigate. Clarify how the data will be used, especially that no names will be associated with any discussions.

Clarify terminology



- Introduce key terms/language so that everyone understands the terms in the same way. Terms can be introduced at the beginning of the discussion or gradually as you progress from one topic to another. For example: PSEA, sexual abuse, exploitation.

Don'ts



- Be careful not to artificially raise expectations about what the information gathered may result in.
- Don't pressure people to provide an interview or participate in a focus group if they don't want to.

Conducting the discussion

Create an atmosphere conducive to discussion and listening



- Allow the person to talk freely and try not to interrupt them.
- Listen carefully. Practice active listening.
- Start with simple questions.
- Be alert to non-verbal signs and behavior that indicate how comfortable the person is, and adjust the topics and timeframe accordingly.
- Be polite.
- Take notes.

Don'ts



- Do not put the participants in a compromising situation by asking questions that may stigmatize them or endanger them.
- Do not rush participants; this may mean asking fewer questions.
- Do not make promises or create expectations about future support.

Concluding the discussion and following up

Offer an opportunity for participants to ask questions, share further, and receive follow-up support



- Invite participants to provide further information or input. Give participants the opportunity to ask questions or share thoughts on additional issues.
- Thank participants for their time and ideas.
- Provide the participants with contact information should they wish to share anything further with the facilitation team.
- Inform the relevant person (i.e. protection focal point) of any sensitive issues or complaints, and provide contact information.

Don'ts



- Do not promise that you will be able to make changes based on the general program feedback (besides PSEA-related issues), but do pass on general feedback you receive about the program to program management.

Reiterate the concept of confidentiality and its limits

Confirm that confidentiality will be respected within limits. Strict confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed due to the organization's moral and/or legal obligation to report and investigate. Clarify again how the data will be used, especially that no names will be associated with any discussions.

2. Example of community dialogue questionnaire

Questions about how communities receive general information

- What are most useful channels of communication available to you now?

Printed material	Internet, mobile and broadcast media	Creative arts	In person
Leaflets	Television	Film and video	Word of mouth
Newspapers	Radio	Theater (including street theater)	Loudspeaker
Magazines	Internet	Music	Door to door
Posters	Social media		
Billboards	Mobile (calls/SMS)		

Questions about trusted information sources

- What three sources of information do you trust the most?

Specific media sources	Specific person/institution	
Television (specify channel)	Government	NGO worker
Radio (specify station)	Community leader	UN staff
Print media (specify newspaper, magazine, etc)	Other community members	Health professional
Internet (specify website)	Religious leader	Police
Social media (specify)	Armed forces	
Other:	Other:	Other:
Don't know	Declined to answer	

- Which three sources do you trust the least?
- Are there any groups (e.g. men, women, older people, and disabled people) who trust different sources of information? [Open-ended question: note alongside]

Questions about barriers to receiving information

- What is stopping you from getting the information you need now?

No access to electricity	I don't trust where the information is coming from	My device is lost or damaged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ TV, radio ■ Computer ■ Mobile phone
Mobile network is down	TV/radio station is no longer running (specify what happened)	
Information is in the wrong language	I can't buy phone credit	
Information is written and I can't read	Other	
Don't know	Declined to answer	

- Which groups (women, children, minority groups) in the community find it harder to get information and why? (This is an open-ended question using which and why.)

Questions about additional PSEA information needs

- What would be the best way to make sure all community members hear about PSEA?

Questions about preferences for communicating with the organization

- What three ways would you like to use to communicate with aid agencies in relation to PSEA? (e.g. to ask a question, to complain or to make a suggestion)

Face to face (at home)	SMS	Social media (specify)	Tweet
Face to face (office/helpdesk)	Email	Suggestion box	Other
Phone call	Letter	Radio/TV show	Don't know

Specific PSEA questions

- Are you aware of the standards of staff behavior defined in the CRS code of conduct? If yes, how did you learn about them?
- What do you think are examples of misconduct by CRS or other aid workers?
- What do you think the community needs to know about the behavior of aid or NGO workers?
- What would be the most effective way for you to learn about the expected behavior standards of aid staff?
- Are there any official channels that you know of that you can use to report misconduct of aid staff working in your community? If yes, how did you learn about these?
- Are there groups in the community who would struggle to use these channels to report misconduct? How can these barriers be addressed?
- What do you need to know more about? Do you have any further questions about PSEA?

Expected and prohibited behavior of staff (including examples)	How to report concerns
What commitments the organization has made	What happens when a complaint is made
How to stay safe to prevent attack/harassment	How to get help after an attack or harassment
Other	

Close

- Thank participants for their participation.
- Explain what the information shared in the questionnaire will be used for.
- Leave time to respond to any questions participants may have and provide them with contact information should they wish to provide additional input or ask questions.

Bibliography

- [Best practice guide: Inter-agency community-based complaints mechanisms](#) (IASC 2016).
- [Guidance note: How to communicate safeguarding and PSEA messages to communities during COVID-19](#) (PSEA 2020).
- [Communication toolbox: Practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with participants and community members](#) (CRS 2013).
- [PSEAH implementation quick reference handbook](#) (CHS Alliance 2020).
- [The Good Enough Guide - Impact measurement and accountability in emergencies](#) (Emergency Capacity Building Project 2017).
- [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019](#).
- [Plain-language version of the PSEA Principles translated into 100+ languages. Above Six Core Principles translated into 100+ languages](#) (These do not reflect the latest update to Principle 4). IASC.
- [Interim technical note: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse \(PSEA\) during COVID-19](#) (IASC, March 31, 2020).
- [CRS recommendations: Guidance on community engagement in light of COVID-19](#) (CRS 2020).
- [Checklist to protect from sexual exploitation and abuse during COVID-19](#) (IASC 2020).

Further resources

- [PSEA communication material](#) (UN). Communications materials that can be adapted.
- [The language and culture of PSEA: Workshop outcome report](#) (InterAction, December 17, 2019). Outlines key linguistic and cultural aspects.
- [No excuse for abuse: Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian action](#) (InterAction, March 20, 2020). Video, available in multiple languages.
- [Translators Without Borders Glossaries](#). Includes gender- and protection-related terminology in multiple languages.
- [Hotline in a Box](#) (IFRC 2020). Tools to help assess, set up and manage channels to communicate with communities.
- [AAPSM Partners Toolkit](#) (USAID 2021).

Developing PSEA Human Resources Policies and Measures



Tools

- Tool 1 Recruitment, onboarding and staff training
- Tool 2: Code of conduct and ethics development plan
- Tool 3: Code of conduct checklist
- HO 4.3 CAFOD Safe recruitment policy
- HO 4.4 CAFOD Safeguarding in interviews
- HO 4.5 CAFOD Conducting police checks
- HO 4.6 CAFOD Requesting references
- HO 4.7 Safeguarding in job descriptions

Audience



PSEA/safeguarding/
protection
focal points



Administration
staff



Senior
managers

Tool 1 Recruitment, onboarding and staff training

The purpose of this document is to support CRS partners in developing human resources processes that are responsive to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Part I provides basic guidelines on incorporating PSEA measures into the HR processes, especially focusing on recruitment and the vetting of hired staff and volunteers. Part II provides recommendations on staff onboarding and training relevant to PSEA. All recommended measures are based on international PSEA standards.



Human resources staff or hiring management should ensure that all new and potential hires understand the organizational commitment to PSEA, and the expectations of them as potential staff members

I. STAFF RECRUITMENT AND VETTING

Human resources staff or hiring management should ensure that all new and potential hires understand the organizational commitment to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and the expectations of them as potential staff members. This means defining organizational protocols, mechanisms and tools for the recruitment process. These should ensure that candidates have not engaged in activities that are not aligned with the organization's commitment to PSEA. The term "staff" in this document refers to employees, volunteers, consultants and interns.

Include PSEA commitments in job advertisement

Inform the candidate of the organization's vision and mission, as well as its culture, values and principles that prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by its employees. This can be done in the job description or on a recruitment page or application form. For online applications, this should be reiterated, and candidates invited to reflect on their personal values and how those align with the organization's, demonstrating a value-based motivation for the job they are pursuing.

- Sample statement: *"The organization requires its staff to treat all people with dignity and respect, and actively prevent harassment, abuse, exploitation and human trafficking everywhere and at all times."*
- The value statement can highlight key values such as honesty, integrity, courage, respect, diversity, commitment, stewardship and accountability.
- Include specific statements that focus on the candidate's motivation for the job, such as: *"We are looking for people who are values led and results driven."*
- Basic humanitarian principles upheld by the organization can include neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence.
- The job advertisement should emphasize the organization's need to employ staff with certain key values.
- Include a summary of the key duties, essential qualifications and most interesting aspects of the job.
- Describe the organizational culture and work environment, and list any benefits and growth opportunities.
- Be strategic and advertise in the best places to reach the appropriate audience for the position.

Include PSEA elements in job descriptions

A job description provides an overview of the position, including responsibilities, qualifications and competencies required. Review the job description with the hiring manager and PSEA focal point to confirm the level of direct interaction with vulnerable populations.

- Job descriptions should include clauses outlining the conduct expected of staff, and refer to the organization's PSEA policy.
- The higher the level of expected interaction with vulnerable populations, the greater the potential risk to those populations, and therefore the greater the need for vetting and due diligence. In the job advertisement, include adequate clauses on performing those processes.
- For positions involving direct work with children, require candidates to sign a statement declaring they have no criminal convictions related to the abuse and/or exploitation of children. This should not be a substitute for running independent police and reference checks on a candidate (where possible).
- Include specific competencies and talents, such as accurate and active listening, integrity, accountability, building relationships, commitment to the job, consistency, reliability, emotional control, freedom from prejudice, and handling stress.

Check gaps in employment history during interview

Seek more information on any gaps in a candidate's employment history by asking:

- How did you spend time between jobs?
- Did you do any volunteer or community work? Ask for references (names and contacts) from these engagements.

Ask questions related to PSEA during the interview and written tests

Provide hiring managers with sample questions or scenarios that are based on the organization's PSEA policy, and code of conduct and ethics, including vision, mission and values.

- During the interview process, discuss the policies on staff-program participant relations and assess the interviewee's responses to questions related to sexual relations with program participants and vulnerability.
- Include the PSEA focal point in the interview process.
- Ask:
 - *Ask the candidate to describe previous work situations in which their morals and integrity have played a significant role in the outcome.*
 - *Ask specific questions about their peers' view of their performance in previous positions.*
 - *At the end of the interview, ask for contact details of peers mentioned in the interview in order to contact them and ask questions about the candidate.*



Seek more information on any gaps in a candidate's employment history

Target gender-balanced recruitment

To facilitate the reporting of sensitive issues, diversify staff composition by gender, especially when jobs will entail working directly with women and children.



- Review job qualifications with the hiring manager to ensure there are no limitations of the candidate pool; for example, in a certain context, women may have less formal education (due to limited access) than men, but may have substantial work and community experience that could also result in the knowledge and skills needed for the position.



- Ensure your job advertising and posting strategy is not limited to online platforms that could exclude certain applicants.
- In the job advertisement, include information that could help attract a wider pool of female candidates, including details of the organization's relevant policies and benefits, such as maternity leave, support for exclusive breastfeeding, the availability of childcare at the office, and flexible working hours.



Monitor and strive for gender balance at all levels of staff responsibility, in both main and sub-offices, and among contracted staff and volunteers.



- When sourcing candidates, be sure to seek recommendations from male and female staff on diverse candidates they believe are experts in the field and who can be recruited for current or future openings.



- When determining who should be on the hiring committee and interview panel, remind hiring managers to select staff from a diverse range (ages and ethnicities) of male and female staff to ensure inclusive input.

- Ensure that thorough internal audits of salaries are conducted so that men and women are paid the same salary for the same work.



- Properly emphasize non-technical competencies to help enable a wider, more diverse pool to be considered.



- Do not ask female candidates if they plan to have children and then, if they respond in the affirmative, tell them they will not be a good fit because they won't be able to travel enough for the role.



- Given that some female candidates may not have as much paid work experience as male candidates, some flexibility in the referencing process is suggested, including allowing non-work references, such as from a teacher or a community leader.



Perform background checks and references

Request at least two references from previous employers. *Note: CRS' standard is three references.* The HR manager and the hiring manager should discuss who to contact for references based on the position's requirements and employment history shared. References could be sought from the candidate's supervisors and peers. References provided by candidates should not be the only ones used. Additional references can be sought on personal and moral integrity and, in the case of faith-based organizations, are usually from religious leaders in the community. Develop a reference checklist and include safeguarding/PSEA questions. Check the reference over the phone or by video chat (Skype, Zoom) but not email. It is vital to verify who is completing the reference, and hear the tone and sincerity of their responses.

- Ensure references are rigorously gathered and follow a specific format/checklist. They should include questions about safeguarding and disciplinary action.
- If the information collected in the reference raises any concerns, these must be communicated very clearly with the hiring staff and management, and recorded in writing.
- Example questions for referee:
 - *What was the nature of the candidate's previous job?*
 - *How do you rate their performance overall? Poor, satisfactory, good or excellent?*
 - *How did the candidate interact with others?*
 - *Why did the candidate leave the job?*
 - *Do you have any concerns about the candidate working with at-risk populations and/or is there anything that might be of concern to our organization?*
 - *Are you aware of the candidate having a criminal record or any issues related to child protection that our organization should be aware of?*
 - *At any stage in their employment, did you undertake any disciplinary actions against the candidate related to any safeguarding issues?*
- Request written consent from the successful candidate to conduct a background/criminal record check. Include a declaration statement on the candidate's confirmation of true information provided as well as consequences of any misstatements, omission or falsification related to the background check process. Consequences should include disqualification from the selection process or termination of contract if already hired.
- Conduct background checks on the successful candidate (international and national), including a criminal record check in their home country and in other countries they have worked, wherever possible.
- If any concerns are flagged in the reference, request further information from the candidate.
- A thorough reference check procedure *should not be waived under any circumstances*, even in a first-phase humanitarian response. Experience has shown that not undertaking a thorough process can result in more time taken to dismiss and replace unsuitable candidates. At worst, it can result in affected populations being exposed to risk.



Conduct background checks on the successful candidate (international and national), including a criminal record check in their home country and in other countries they have worked, wherever possible

All staff contracts include PSEA elements and organization's code of conduct

- All staff contracts include a statement of understanding of and adherence to the organization's code of conduct.
- All staff contracts include copies of the [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019](#).
- The code of conduct includes the same principles at a minimum.
- All staff contracts include organizational values, mission and vision.
- All signed documents are kept on personnel files.

II. PSEA MEASURES IN STAFF ONBOARDING AND TRAINING

All new staff receive a briefing on PSEA policy.¹

Staff are rigorously taken through the code of conduct and the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) complaints and investigations mechanisms. Staff are given the time to discuss and fully understand the relevant PSEA policies and procedures including consequences of code of conduct breaches.

The agency distributes the code of conduct, in English or translated, to all staff.

Basic PSEA training forms part of the onboarding process to ensure all staff know about the prevention and response measures to SEA issues. Set up and administer a system that checks staff and volunteer understanding of safeguarding training content (e.g. post-training test). Ensure safeguarding is considered in performance reviews, including probation.

Staff who have direct contact with program participants receive full PSEA training including on the causes and consequences of gender-based violence (GBV) and SEA. Staff who work directly with children also receive child protection training.

Staff working on feedback and response mechanisms (either inter-agency or project-based) and are receiving sensitive feedback, receive additional PSEA training on internal reporting system training as an obligatory part of onboarding.

Staff with prolonged and largely unsupervised time working with women and children are especially targeted for PSEA support, advice and training.

All staff receive annual refresher training on the code of conduct and PSEA, and the implications of breaching these standards, and learn about the mechanism to file complaints and reports of misconduct.

The code of conduct (either the simplified or complete version with IASC standards at a minimum) is displayed in all operational and office areas.

Managers and senior leadership have a particular role and responsibility to ensure that a training strategy is implemented to raise awareness among all staff on gender mainstreaming, GBV, human rights, SEA prevention and response, and the code of conduct, as well as how to report alleged incidences.

PSEA policy and reporting mechanism information (SEA reporting forms)² are available in the field for staff reference. PSEA materials encouraging staff to report SEA misconduct are displayed in agency premises at all locations.

During the annual staff retreat, staff have the opportunity to discuss organizational and personal values, and how those influence their motivation.

Continuously review, identify gaps, and strengthen recruitment processes with regard to safeguarding.

1. Example policy: [Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Child Protection](#), CARE International.

2. SEA [model complaints referral form](#), PSEA Task Force.

Tool 2 Code of conduct and ethics development plan

This section aims to assist CRS partner organizations to develop or review their codes of conduct.³ It stipulates primary and recommended actions that contribute to the development of a comprehensive code of conduct and ethics, based on international standards, and principles of PSEA. A code of conduct serves two primary purposes: it protects the people that the organization serves, and protects the reputation of the organization and its staff.

■ Primary actions ■ Recommended actions

	Actions	Y/N
1	Ensure senior leadership is committed to continual support in the code of conduct development process. Senior leadership should initiate, lead and foster widespread consultations among staff, volunteers and partners, to ensure the code is responsive to the organization's operational context.	
2	Through a consultative process, define the scope and application of the code, in line with the organizational values, vision and mission. Define which staff the code applies to and under which circumstances (e.g., while on duty, off duty, etc.). If any staff are excluded from the application of the code, define that as well as whether any operational context requires different/additional standards of the code.	
3	Consult and identify other forms of prohibited conduct beyond all forms of exploitation and abuse (such as harassment, alcohol and substance abuse, carrying weapons, etc.)	
4	Consult and identify expected attitudes and behavior of staff, such as cultural sensitivity, that are in line with organization's values, vision, mission and principles.	
5	Consult human resources standards and national laws related to different disciplinary actions that should be in place should the code be breached, up to and including dismissal.	
6	Define and develop policies and procedures in support of the reporting requirements for code breaches to be used by both staff and program participants (e.g. whistleblower policy, ⁴ internal reporting, feedback and complaints procedures, human resources manual).	
7	Clearly define terminology and use it consistently, when referring to types of behavior that are not permitted or could be breaches of the code.	
8	Consult and define in writing, within the internal reporting procedure document, the investigation process related to sexual exploitation and abuse, and explain when investigations will be undertaken.	
9	Define and refer to the organization's confidentiality policy ⁵ addressing sharing of internal information with persons and entities outside of the organization.	

3. Example [Code of Conduct](#) (International Committee of the Red Cross).

4. Example whistleblower policy: [Sample Whistleblower Protection Policy](#) (National Council of Nonprofits).

5. Example confidentiality policy: [Sample Confidentiality Agreements for Information about Clients](#) (National Council of Nonprofits).

10	Define the application and inclusion of the code to all contracts and agreements or other documents related to contractual relationships that the organization might enter into, as well as internal documents (e.g. new and existing employment contracts, service contracts, job descriptions, terms of reference and performance appraisal systems).	
11	Decide and define who within the organization is responsible for ensuring that the code is implemented, monitored and evaluated. Any such decision should clearly define the primary responsibility of managers to ensure staff are informed, receive and understand the code by means of training, and regular staff updates on code changes, as well as staff awareness-raising and staff performance pertaining to the provisions of the code.	
12	<p>Before finalizing the code, consult with a legal expert to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The code is in line with the national labor laws of your organization's registration country ■ The code is consistent ■ Staff can legally be held to account if they breach the code <p>Global networks' member organizations should consult their respective structures in aligning the code to the joint standards (e.g. Caritas Internationalis⁶).</p>	
13	Plan for a regular review of the code (e.g. every two years), to ensure that the agency code matches the work context, and that any updates from the aid sector on the standards of behavior (e.g. updated IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) are made. All code of conduct updates must be promptly disseminated throughout the organization.	
14	Develop and implement a strategy for the dissemination of, and training activities on, the code of conduct for all current and future staff, at all levels.	

6. [Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct for Staff](#) (Caritas Internationalis).

Tool 3 Code of conduct checklist

Minimum Code of Conduct and Ethics content checklist

■ Define the scope and purpose of the code of conduct.¹

- This Code of Conduct (the “Code”) applies to all staff. For the purposes of the Code, anyone who works for the organization under an employment contract or on another basis (such as internship, a consultancy contract or as a volunteer) is considered a staff member.
- The Code is applicable at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- The Code is developed in line with international and UN standards, while also recognizing the importance of local laws and cultures. Staff are expected to uphold local law wherever they operate, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent, in which case the Code applies.

■ Include existing professional ethical codes or statements.

- Staff conduct must be characterized by integrity, respect and loyalty to the organization’s interests and must not in any way harm or compromise its reputation.
- Staff must show due respect, particularly through their conduct, dress and language, for the religious beliefs, usages and customs, rules, practices and habits of the people of the country or context they are in and of their place of work.
- The rules set in the Code are intended to promote safety, to ensure respect for the people with whom the organization comes into contact, to protect staff members and to project a positive image of the organization, so as to guarantee the effectiveness and integrity of its work.

■ Include the IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior, is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefiting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
- Humanitarian agencies are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

■ Include specific PSEA-related rules for staff behavior.

- The purchase of sexual services and the practice of sexual exploitation are prohibited. Sexual exploitation is understood as abuse of authority, trust or a situation of vulnerability for sexual ends in exchange for money, work, goods or services.
- Entering into a sexual relationship with a child (a girl or boy under 18 years of age) or inciting or forcing a child to take part in activities of a sexual nature, whether or not he or she is aware of the act committed and irrespective of consent, is prohibited. This prohibition also covers pornographic activities (photos, videos, games, etc.) that do not involve sexual contact with the child, as well as acquiring, storing or circulating documents of a pedophilic nature, irrespective of the medium used.

1. See example [Code of Conduct](#) (International Committee of the Red Cross 2018)

- Staff are obliged by the Code to report concerns, suspicions and/or incidents of abuse, exploitation or breaches of this Code – irrespective of when it happened.
- Include other PSEA-relevant rules.**
 - Staff are prohibited from using IT equipment, software or email and social media platforms to engage in activity that is illegal under local or international law or that encourages conduct that would constitute a criminal offence. This includes any material that intimidates or harasses any group based on protected characteristics, or encourages extremism.
 - Staff are prohibited from taking photographs, filming or making audio recordings in the course of their duties, irrespective of the medium used, unless their work so requires, or they obtain approval from the organization.
 - Staff are prohibited from using IT equipment to view, download, create, distribute or save in any format inappropriate or abusive material including but not limited to pornography or depictions of child abuse.
- Include information about reporting complaints.**
 - Staff are obligated to bring to the attention of the relevant manager any potential incident, abuse or concern that they witness, are made aware of, or suspect which appears to breach the standards contained in this Code. Staff reporting concerns are protected by the Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace policy.
 - Staff who have a complaint or concern relating to breach of the Code should report it immediately to their line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their line manager, they may report to a senior manager or a member of the HR team.
 - Staff receiving reports or concerns are obliged to action or refer the report immediately as per the organization's Complaints Policy and procedures.
 - Complaints reporting email: sample@xxxx.org
 - Online confidential reporting platform link: http://xxxxx
 - Staff can also make a complaint in person, by letter or by phone to one of the people listed: line manager, HR manager or finance and administration manager, executive director.
- Include statements of receipt and acknowledgment.**
 - In accepting my appointment, I undertake to discharge my duties and to regulate my conduct in accordance with the requirements of this Code.
 - Signature line with date and location.

An extended version of this checklist is available on [EFOM](#).

Other HR resources

- HO 4.3 CAFOD Safe recruitment policy
- HO 4.4 CAFOD Safeguarding in interviews
- HO 4.5 CAFOD Conducting police checks
- HO 4.6 CAFOD Requesting references
- [HO 4.7 Safeguarding in job descriptions](#)



Developing a Referral Pathway for Essential Protection Services



Tools

- Tool 1: Sample KII guide: National protection actors
- Tool 2: Sample KII guide: Local protection service providers
- Tool 3: Referral card template
- Tool 4: Referral checklist

Audience



PSEA/safeguarding/
protection
focal points



MEAL
staff



Program
staff

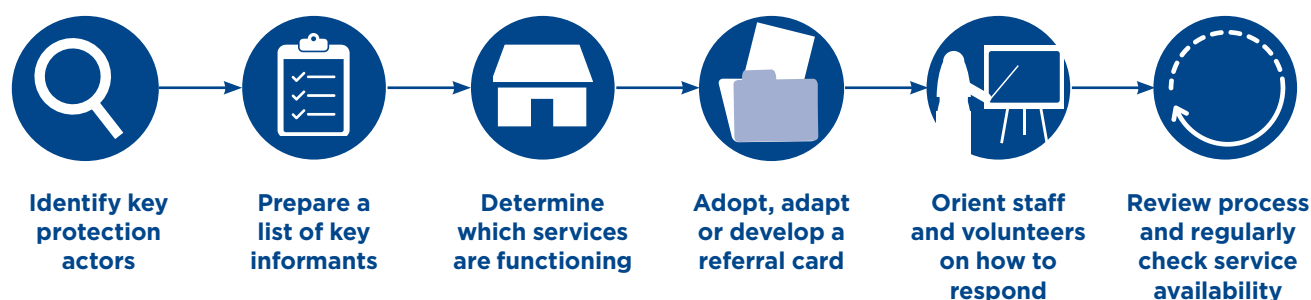
There are two key reasons for developing a referral path: to address protection risks in the communities we serve and to strengthen our safeguarding practices. According to the guidance in CRS' [COVID-19: Safe and dignified programming](#) (2020) and CRS' general approach to programming, it is crucial to understand and respond to protection risks that are exacerbated by emergency situations and public health outbreaks. As CRS is not a stand-alone protection actor, particular protection risks within the communities we serve—such as gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, violence against children, and family separation—need to be addressed through referral to specialized protection service providers. By developing and activating an efficient referral path, we assist people in need of protection from these particular risks to access services that CRS cannot provide directly.



By developing and activating an efficient referral path, we assist people in need of protection to access services that CRS cannot provide directly

Furthermore, with a referral pathway in place, we ensure adequate response to any safeguarding issues, such as all forms of exploitation and abuse, and sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA) in particular, by assisting victims/survivors to access vital services. This toolkit provides STEPS and supporting tools to develop a referral pathway to support people to meet these essential needs, by referring them to other actors with the necessary expertise and capacity to act:

Key steps to developing a referral pathway



1. Identify key protection actors

- Identify who is the lead in providing protection services in your context; this could be the government, a United Nations body, or a local or international nongovernmental organization (NGO). Determine whether the Protection Cluster (and sub-clusters) are activated in your context.
- Ideally, the government and/or Protection Cluster in the country maps available protection services, and develops a referral pathway. If the Protection Cluster is activated, contact it first for guidance on how to proceed. Alternatively, if you are aware of a government or UN body as the lead in protection services, contact them for guidance or to request a referral pathway.
- If there is no referral process or Protection Cluster, identify which actors are responsible for certain issues or have expertise in those areas. Do this by researching the roles of different organizations. Contact government institutions and local authorities to help identify relevant actors, if necessary.

- Think through who the actors are, their influence and relationships. Carry out one actor analysis for each protection problem. Consider different actors, particularly those at the local level, including community-based organizations (CBO), INGOs and NGOs, local media, national and local women's organizations, clubs and groups, academics, social networks, village or community leaders, charities, religious institutions, local businesses, unions, local government officials or departments, police, social services, the UN, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.
- Identify with whom you will coordinate, according to who has the practical means or the mandated authority to respond, and whether you need a referral pathway at the national, regional or local level. The more local the referral pathway, the more useful it will be for people with protection needs; however, larger actors may be mandated to respond to certain protection issues.

2. Prepare a list of key informants

- From the above mapping, identify initial key informants to contact to begin mapping available services/service providers. Start with larger, national actors who have a specific protection mandate and oversee protection services rather than directly provide them (e.g. government, UN).
- Identify a second list of service providers for a second round of interviews. These could be smaller, local actors who provide services to meet one specific protection need (e.g. women's shelters, health services, women's and children's helplines, family tracing and reunification, and services for people with disabilities).

3. Contact key protection actors to determine what services are still functioning/can be accessed and by whom

- Use **Tool 1A** to get an overview of the service providers the larger protection actors promote based on the safety, quality and accessibility of their services. If there is more than one lead or influential national protection actor, aim to contact them all, to round out/triangulate information on service providers.
- Next, contact service providers directly, using **Tool 1B** to discuss their services, mode of operation, who can access services (are they child-friendly, disability-friendly, etc.), cost of access, etc.

4. Adopt, adapt or develop a referral card

- Using **Tool 2** as a basis, document service providers in a short table.
- Where possible, share the referral card with service providers to verify accuracy.
- Translate into local languages or the languages of program participants as necessary.
- Print in a pocket-sized format.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have a copy on them during field activities. Follow CRS' [Guidance on Community Engagement in Light of COVID-19](#) for safe practices.
- Consider other means of sharing this information, such as posting visual representations of the pathways and hotline numbers in safe locations.

5. Orient staff and volunteers on how to respond when informed of a protection need

Share the following information (further guidance on what to say and what not to say can be found in the [GBV Pocket Guide](#) (IASC 2015):

- If an incident is disclosed to you by the person affected/survivor, introduce yourself. Ask how you can help. Practice respect, safety, confidentiality and non-discrimination. If the disclosure is made in person, practice physical distancing.
 - Communicate accurate information about available services.
 - If they give permission for you to do so, refer them to those services by communicating detailed information about the available resource/service, including how to access it, relevant times and locations, focal points at the service, safe transport options, etc.
 - Do not share information about the survivor or their experience to anyone without the explicit and informed consent of the survivor. Do not record details of the incident or personal identifiers of the survivor.
- If an incident is disclosed by someone else other than the survivor (e.g. a family member), provide up-to-date and accurate information about any services and support that may be available to the survivor. Encourage the individual to share this information safely and confidentially with the survivor, [so that they can disclose].
NOTE: DO NOT seek out the survivor/person affected. If a child is the survivor, please report the case to the lead child protection actor.
- If a disclosed incident involves a CRS staff member or affiliate, follow CRS reporting procedures – through [EthicsPoint](#), to the country representative, to your supervisor, or local human resources department. Please go directly to EthicsPoint where possible. Do not discuss it with anyone else.

6. Review your process and continue to check the protection service availability regularly. Confirm that services are operational before providing information. Add new services as they become available.

- Using **Tool 3**, review your process and adjust as possible as the current environment and capacities allow.
- Reach out regularly (e.g. every week to two weeks) by phone or email to national protection actors and service providers to assess if anything has changed.
- Update referral pathway accordingly and redistribute to staff.
- If you have any concerns about the safety or quality of services, forward these to the service provider and any other relevant protection actor. If the Protection Cluster is activated, follow up with it for a quality check on services.

Tool 1 Sample KII guide: National protection actors

Introduction

Introduce yourself and present the purpose of the discussion:

- Introduce CRS and scope of our programming (if not known by the key informant).
- Tell them you are developing or updating a referral card for staff serving people and communities, so that people with protection needs can be given accurate information on how to access essential protection services.
- Say you are requesting their input and expertise on currently available protection services nationally or in a specific location.

Questions

1. Please give me an overview of protection services you recommend for different types of protection issues (sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), child protection/separation, trafficking in persons, legal support, psychosocial support etc). Please note: If a referral pathway already exists, ask if it has been updated due to COVID-19. If not, ask whether it will be updated. If the answer is NO to both these questions, follow the rest of the process as outlined. Use table 1 provided to capture details on each protection service/organization.

2. What sort of checks do you usually conduct or have you conducted on these services? (prompt for services that are accessible to someone regardless of gender, age and other diversity factors; acceptability; and quality) (see the WHO [Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, Quality \(AAAQ\) Framework](#) for further guidance).

1. [Hotline in a Box](#) (IFRC 2020), page 30.

3. What limitations are these protection services currently facing? Are there any national plans being developed to address these limitations?

4. Are there any service providers* you do not recommend? For what reason?

Organization	Contact person	Service
Organization name	Name	Service 1
Location	Email address	Service 2
Start date/end date	Phone number	Service 3

*Add additional table for each service provider

Tool 2 Sample KII guide: Local protection service providers

Introduction

Introduce yourself and present the purpose of the discussion:

- Introduce CRS and the scope of our programming (if not known by the key informant).
- Explain that you are developing or updating a referral card for staff serving people and communities so people with protection needs can be given accurate information on how to access essential protection services in the context of COVID-19.
- Say you are requesting their input and expertise on available services that continue to operate now, related to [particular protection issue]*, including any modifications to the mode of delivery.

Questions

1. Are your services continuing to function? Have there been any changes in mode of delivery? Accessibility? Opening hours? Do we have your permission to share these details with participants of our humanitarian programming?

2. Who can access these services? (probe for any access restrictions based on gender, age, ability/disability, ethnicity, religion, etc.). Is there a cost to access your services?

3. What safeguarding procedures do you have in place?

* Adjust to the specific protection service on offer by the local actor.

4. If you receive a report of another protection issue you cannot address directly (e.g. child separation, trafficking, psychosocial support, etc.), to what services are you able to refer people? Do you have specific contacts/focal points in those services? How frequently are the contacts updated?

5. If we hear of any positive or negative experiences or suggestions about your service, how do we feed them back to you?

6. What are some of the achievements and challenges your organization is experiencing, particularly in the context of maintaining services for people in need during the COVID-19 crisis? (prompt for services for vulnerable groups specifically women and girls, elderly, people with disabilities – contextualize as relevant).

Tool 3 Referral card template*

If you are informed of a protection incident (violation of rights, gender-based violence, etc.)

1. Provide a **safe** and **caring** environment for the survivor and respect their wishes and the principle of **confidentiality**
2. Ask what their **immediate needs** are
3. Provide clear and honest information about **available services**



Update : DATE

What services are available?

SGBV

MHPSS

Health / nutrition

Protection and legal assistance and advice

Education

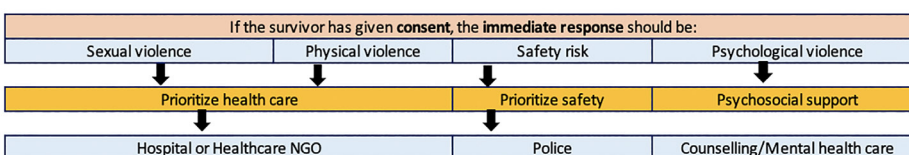
WASH

NO REFERRAL WITHOUT **explicit consent**, except:

1. When there is a threat to the life of the survivor
2. When a survivor threatens to cause serious harm to another person
3. In case of suspicion of abuse or neglect toward a child and in the child's best interest

In the event of **rape**, inform the victim of the importance of accessing medical care within 72 hours.

If the survivor agrees and requests, ask for their informed consent and carry out referrals and support for accessing services.



Organization
Point focal: Name - Contact details (phone & email)
Services provided:
Target group:
Opening hours:

Organization
Point focal: Name - Contact details (phone & email)
Services provided:
Target group:
Opening hours:

Organization
Point focal: Name - Contact details (phone & email)
Services provided:
Target group:
Opening hours:

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Opening hours:

Organization
Point focal: Name - Contact details (phone & email)
Services provided:
Target group:
Opening hours:

* This can be edited in the Excel version. Please note, this list is not exhaustive, please add or adjust according to your context, and relevant protection needs and issues.

Tool 4 Referral checklist

CHECKLIST		Yes/No
1	Is there an existing referral process/pathway in place? Either government or Protection Cluster (or Sub-Cluster)?	
2	If no referral pathways are in place, have you carried out an <i>actor mapping analysis</i> ² to identify all the key actors directly or indirectly involved or who have influence over a particular protection problem?	
3	Does the referral process ensure informed consent? (<i>Ensure the survivor is consulted and takes part in the decisions affecting them.</i>)	
4	Have you ensured that everyone within the organization (from drivers to the head of office) understands what is expected of them and of their staff or managers in terms of when and how to refer cases, as well as the organizational limits (i.e. what cases the organization can and can't get involved in)?	
5	Do you ensure that staff members are aware that they should never share sensitive information (including HIV status) with anyone not directly involved in the victim/survivor's care without the victim/survivor's permission? (<i>Ensure there are steps in place to protect medical/other records, including during emergencies, from falling into the hands of potential/existing perpetrators.</i>)	
6	Does your referral process ensure that specialist organizations are informed by your organization of any information you have so that they can take further action? ³	
7	Are you giving communities information about where they can go to access other agencies directly?	
8	Are you behaving appropriately by considering the person's culture, age, ability and gender? (<i>Respect safety, dignity and rights. Treat the patient/survivor with respect. Ensure all communications are done in a safe place. Respect people's rights to make their own decisions.</i>)	
9	Are you following existing standard operating procedures at all times?	

Adapted from [Humanitarian Protection Handbook](#) (Trócaire 2014).

- At the planning and information collection stage, think about who the actors are, their influence and relationships. Carry out one actor analysis for each protection problem. Consider different actors, particularly those at the local level, including community-based organizations, INGOs and NGOs, local media, women's organizations, clubs and groups, academics, social networks, village or community leaders, charities, religious institutions, local businesses, unions, local government officials or departments, police, social services, armies, the UN and ICRC. Identify with whom you will coordinate according to who has the practical means or the mandated authority to respond.
- Sometimes you may not know which agency to go to, or the issue may concern several. In this case, use humanitarian coordination mechanisms, such as the Global Protection Cluster. At the field level, the cluster will meet regularly to share information.

References and further resources

Gender Based Violence AOR, Global Protection Cluster. 2020. [Rapid Assessment Remote Service Mapping Template](#) (COVID-19).

IASC. 2015. [How to support survivors of gender-based violence when a GBV actor is not available in your area: A step-by-step pocket guide for humanitarian practitioners.](#)

IASC. April 6, 2020. [Identifying & Mitigating Gender-based Violence Risks within the COVID-19 Response.](#)

IFRC. 2020. [Hotline in a Box.](#)

Trócaire. 2014. [Humanitarian Protection Handbook.](#)

Feedback, Complaints and Response Mechanisms (FCRM) and PSEA

Please see *Feedback, Complaints and Response Mechanisms Guidance* (CRS 2020) in the Protection Mainstreaming section of the CRS [Emergency Field Operations Manual](#) (EFOM) to access this resource.

Audience



PSEA/safeguarding/
protection
focal points



MEAL
staff



Senior
managers



Program
staff

Responding to SEA Reports (Internal Reporting and Investigations System)



Tools

- Tool 1: Model report-handling and escalation procedures
- Tool 2: Adapting report-handling and escalation procedures
- Tool 3: Checklist for managing investigations
- Tool 4: Example investigation management worksheet
- Tool 5: Investigation plan
- Tool 6: The PEACE model of investigation interviews
- Tool 7: Interviewing tips and techniques
- Tool 8: Investigation report template

Audience



PSEA/safeguarding/
protection
focal points



Senior
managers



Administration
staff

Tool 1 Model report-handling and escalation procedures

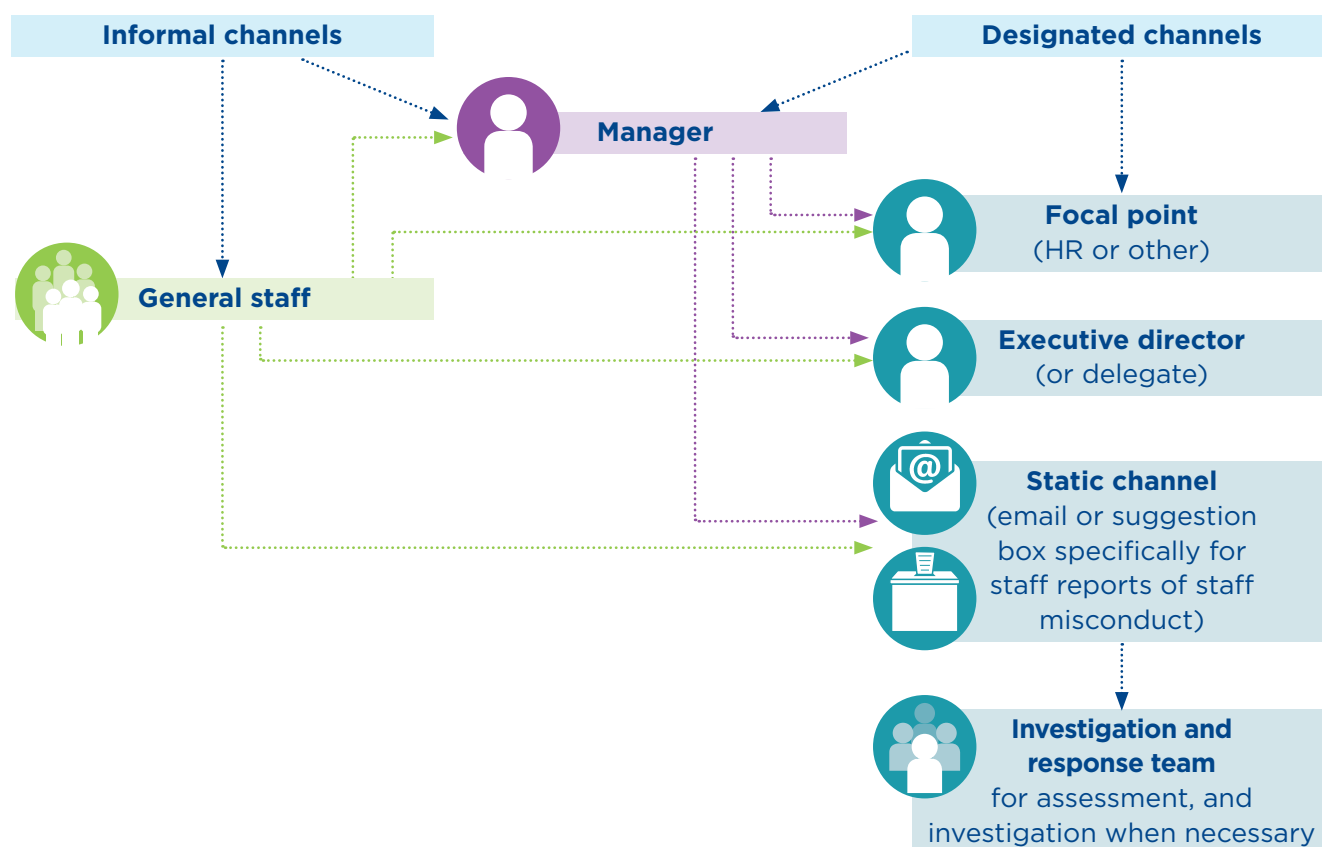
Purpose

The purpose of these procedures is to outline the core principles and steps that should be taken by staff members who receive reports of potential PSEA/safeguarding policy violations committed by staff, partners, contractors or vendors against other staff, program participants or community members.

The goal is to move reports, including widespread rumors, to those responsible for investigation as soon as possible and as directly as possible, involving as few people as possible, until they get to the safeguarding investigation team, in order to best preserve confidentiality.

The goal is to swiftly move reports to the safeguarding investigation team.

Overview of escalation process



Responsibilities

General staff

Staff who are targeted for harassment or abuse: To protect their own confidentiality, staff who experience harassment or abuse should report their concerns through one of the designated channels. Ideally, an organization should have both a static channel for making reports and a focal point who can discuss the process with the victim/survivor. The staff member should also be able to go directly to someone in senior management, or their manager. The staff member needs to be aware that any manager, focal point or senior manager is obligated to follow up on the report, which may require an investigation.

An organization should have both a static channel for making reports and a focal point who can discuss the process with the victim/survivor

Staff who receive a complaint from another staff member: Sometimes a colleague might confide in you about being targeted for harassment or violence.

- Report on your own behalf if witnessed and impacted: You have the right to file a report on your own behalf if you witnessed someone being harassed or abused and it creates an offensive working environment for you. This can also take pressure off the person who experienced it.
- Encourage your colleague to report it directly through an appropriate channel: Help them to find the channel that feels safest. This can include their direct line manager.
- If you feel that your colleague or others are at risk of harm because of another staff member's conduct, consider making a report to the highest level: The targeted person may need to be involved in the investigation, especially if it was not witnessed, but should willingly make that choice. You have a duty to ensure no one is put in harm's way. If you fear the subject of the complaint is causing harm to the victim/survivor and/or poses a similar risk to others, including program participants, you need to make an immediate report to the highest-ranking designated channel (executive director or designate) or use the assistance of the focal point to do so. All actions will be taken with the appropriate respect for the confidentiality, safety, security and well-being of all parties involved, including the reporter.

If you receive a complaint that involves a victim/survivor who is a program participant, child, community member or member of another organization, you are required to report it through the designated channels: It is mandatory to report any concerns, suspicions, widespread rumors or direct reports of potential staff misconduct that targets someone outside the organization, especially in connection with work.

- If the report comes directly from a community member to a staff member, the staff member must escalate to the designated reporting channels within 24 hours, and should inform the community member that as staff they are obligated to do so. The staff member can inform the community member that their identity can be protected in this process, if desired.
- If the report comes through a static feedback, complaints and response mechanism (FCRM), the staff member reviewing it should immediately remove it from the FCRM system—to best protect the privacy of all involved—and escalate it within 24 hours to the designated reporting channels.

See chart below: **Receiving a report from a community member.**

If you are unsure whether the complaint should be reported, discuss your concerns with your designated focal point. Keep in mind that if it is a credible allegation, or suspicious behavior involving serious misconduct, the focal point is required to report it to the investigation and response teams, and will always take the reporter's and the victim/survivor's safety, security and well-being concerns into account when escalating and preparing for next steps.

Managers

Must report to one of the designated channels and should inform the reporter of their obligation: Managers have a duty to immediately escalate all potential safeguarding policy violations within 24 hours to one of the designated channels, as agreed by senior management. Staff may inadvertently or unknowingly report issues to managers, when discussing concerns. Managers have an obligation, especially if a targeted person is directly reporting their issue to the manager, to escalate it to senior management, who decide how best to address the issue. Managers should immediately inform the staff of this obligation.

Managers should be trained on the investigation process, not because they will necessarily be involved, but so that they can convey the necessary information to their teams and help to dissipate any fears or concerns about the process. The manager should always emphasize that the process will take into account the safety, security and well-being of any victims/survivors, and anyone else who may be at risk in this process.

Designated reporting channels

Focal point: A trained PSEA focal point is probably the most important reporting channel. They can help people who have questions or are uncertain about reporting, and advise them on the process if they have concerns. The focal point should always emphasize that all investigation steps will always take into account the safety, security and well-being of any victims/survivors, and anyone else who may be at risk in this process.

Credible allegations or suspicions of particularly egregious behavior (sexual exploitation, abuse or violence, or child abuse) should be shared with senior management in the response team within 24 hours to determine next steps. Should the allegation or suspicion involve any members of the investigation team, they should not be included in the communication update.

Executive director (or designate): Credible allegations or suspicions of a particularly egregious behavior (sexual exploitation, abuse or violence, or child abuse) should be shared with senior management in the response team within 24 hours to determine next steps. Should the allegation or suspicion involve any member of the investigation team, they should not be included in the communication update.

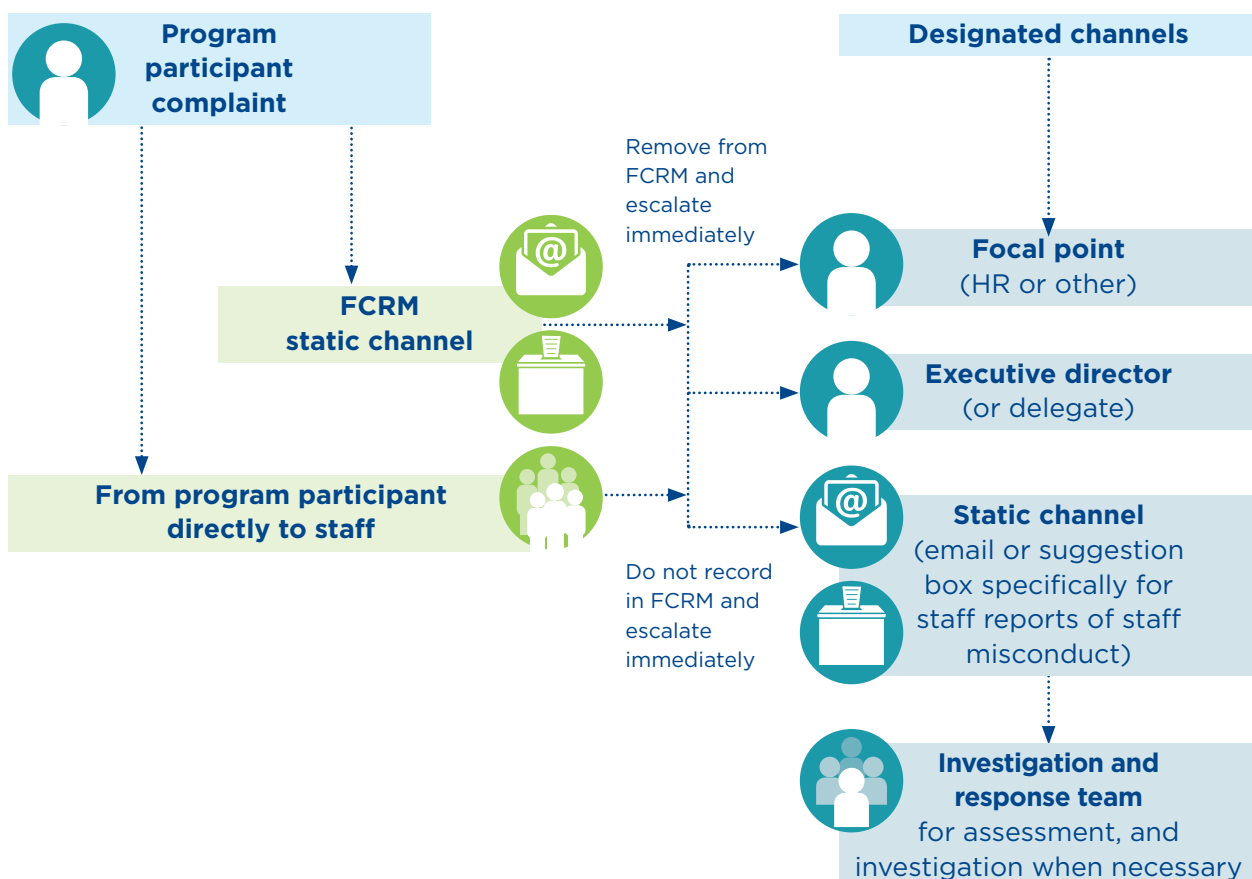
If it is a credible allegation, or suspicious behavior involving serious misconduct, the focal points are required to report it

It is also important to ensure the reporter is appreciated for raising the concerns, and the director should express how seriously the organization takes these issues.

Static channel: The static channel should be monitored regularly by the focal point or other representative on the response team (a member of human resources) to ensure reports are forwarded to the investigation and response teams for decisions on next steps, also within 24 hours of receipt. It should be a dedicated channel for staff to report concerns, and separate from the community-based FCRM. Because of the nature of the community-based mechanism, many staff would be able to read a complaint of staff-on-staff misbehavior, which can breach confidentiality and fuel gossip. The dedicated staff channel might include a special email address or a suggestion box, both of which enable anonymous reports. Such reports should only be accessible by focal points or HR.

Handling SEA complaints in the community

Receiving a report from a community member



Investigation and response teams

Investigation team: It is important to designate focal points to receive complaints and lead an investigation. Sometimes, the composition of the team will need to be adjusted to include special skills (language, interviewing women or children, etc.). To maintain independence, those who may have a close relationship with the reporter or the subject of the complaint or have supervisory oversight should not be involved in the investigation team. Ideally, interviews should include two interviewers.

Response team: The response team should typically comprise those who oversee the investigation, reach conclusions and take any necessary disciplinary action, although the investigation team may make recommendations. Should the investigators need specific documents for review from other teams, typically a member of the response team, as a senior manager, can request such documentation, deflecting the true nature of the request, so as to minimize speculation and exposure of the details of the investigation to other non-related staff. Members of the investigation team then review the documents, as needed. The response team should be limited to three to five senior managers directly responsible for making decisions.

Tool 2 Adapting report-handling and escalation procedures

The following points with questions should enable organizations to define their report-handling and escalation procedure for staff to report PSEA/safeguarding issues or concerns. These questions refer to the Model Report Handling and Escalation Process and should be used in the consultative process with all staff when developing the Escalation Procedure.

Responsibilities of staff

- **Staff reporting their own concerns:** Is the above process similar to the existing one in your organization? What is different? What would be challenging for staff when following the recommended procedures? How would you address those challenges?
- **Staff reporting concerns about incidents they have witnessed or that targeted program participants:** Is the above process similar to the existing one in your organization? What is different? What would be challenging for staff when following the recommended procedures? How would you address those challenges?

Responsibilities of managers

How do your managers currently handle these issues? Do they try to solve them on their own? How well is that working? What are the challenges that you might face with managers in adapting the recommended procedures? How would you address those challenges?

Designated channels

There are three recommended channels for filing a report, apart from through the line manager: focal point, member of senior management and a static channel (email address or suggestion box).

- Is this a similar process to what your organization already has? What is different?
- Who would you designate to those positions? What static channels would you use?
- What do you think would be challenging for staff in the recommended procedures? How would you address those challenges?

Investigation and response teams

- What process would you use to form your investigation and response teams?
- Who would be on these teams? Would you keep them small or draw from a larger pool?
- How would you adapt the teams if one of the member's independence in the investigation might be compromised?

Tool 3 Checklist for managing investigations

MANAGING AN INVESTIGATION

Receive the allegation

Is the allegation credible?



Prepare an investigation plan

Remember safety, confidentiality, criminal conduct, labor law and donor reporting



Identify the investigation and response teams

Trained investigators, language skills, special expertise



Identify support services for victim/survivor

Medical and psychosocial services



Identify interim steps for subject of complaint

Suspend or reassign subject of complaint



Identify risks in investigation process

Safety, operational and program, legal, reputational and media



Identify documents to be reviewed

Program documents, HR records and logs, social media postings, email and phone records, etc.



Identify communication plans

Updates for response team, and communication with victim, subject of complaint, impacted team and all staff



Identify timeline for investigation

Review period, interview period, investigation report finalization



Identify resources needed

People, travel and interview locations, document requests



Identify interviewees, order of interviews and place

First interview complainant, then subject of complaint. Ensure interview location is safe and private.



OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT OF INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

Allow investigation team independence



Revise the investigation plan



CONCLUDING AN INVESTIGATION

Factual findings and conclusions



Disciplinary and corrective measures



MANAGING AN INVESTIGATION

Receive the allegation

- Is there enough information that there is a **credible allegation** to begin an investigation? A credible allegation includes enough information to identify the specific, alleged perpetrator(s), specific misconduct and either a specific victim/survivor or a specific target group, within a certain time period. It is credible if it could possibly occur (i.e., the perpetrator had the opportunity to commit misconduct).
- If it is a **vague allegation** that does not identify any alleged perpetrator(s) and/or the specific misconduct, consider:
 - The designated investigator returns to the reporter for more details, especially a third-party reporter; the person who returns to a victim/reporter should be the same investigator for the duration of the investigation; OR
 - If unable to reach the reporter, consider:
 - Broad awareness-raising sessions with potentially involved staff about standards of conduct and reporting mechanisms if they have suspicions of misconduct.
 - Surveys or focus group discussions with the target population about their experiences with the program and staff.
 - Document the review, narrowing down people who could be involved, and identifying any past complaints or HR issues.
 - The investigator conducts discrete interviews with a few staff members to see whether they have any concerns in the field or in the office.
- Once there is a credible allegation:
 - Identify:
 - Potential policy violations.
 - Whether there is potential criminal conduct that requires reporting to law enforcement.
 - Begin preparing an investigation plan.

Information gathering versus investigating

Keep in mind that it can be difficult to distinguish between gathering more information and beginning the investigation. Generally, when you begin interviewing others besides the original reporter, that is an investigation. However, when there has been a very serious allegation (such as an unidentifiable staff member is sexually exploiting or abusing program participants or children in the program), more follow-up may be required before the actual investigation can begin. At a minimum, hold refresher sessions with staff on expected conduct and ways to report misconduct, so that other staff can report if they have observed something. The degree of follow-up should always be proportionate to the type of misconduct alleged. An initial allegation that lacks sufficient detail does not relieve the organization of some degree of follow-up, even if there is not a full investigation.

Prepare an investigation plan

Keep in mind the following points when preparing the investigation plan:

- **Safety of all involved is the priority:** How you conduct the investigation should always consider the safety of the victims/survivors, reporters, witnesses, investigators, the subject of the complaint and colleagues. Safety concerns should determine the order of interviews and the amount of information on the allegations shared with interviewees. Safety is the responsibility of managers.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is an important part of security. Ensure that only those that need to know are informed of identities, and of the content of allegations and statements made during the investigation.
- **Criminal conduct:** Do the authorities need to be informed or involved in the investigation? You should never jeopardize an investigation that law enforcement will ultimately lead. If the misconduct will be reported to the authorities by either the organization or the victim/survivor, the investigation plan should identify this action and any actions taken to suspend the subject of the complaint, and should list any relevant documents, computers, phones, etc., that have been sought/confiscated. If law enforcement takes the lead on the investigation, you can suspend the subject of the complaint, in compliance with labor law, and await the outcome of the investigation.
- **Compliance with labor law:** Ensure the investigation approach and plan comply with local labor law and internal policies about when the subject of the complaint needs to be informed, type of information shared, etc.
- **Donor reporting:**¹ Is the implicated staff member funded by a donor who requires mandatory reporting of all allegations? Prepare and send the notification of the credible allegation as soon as possible, and inform the donor that you will share a copy of the investigation plan when ready.

Identify the investigation and response teams

- **Investigation team:**
 - **Trained investigators:** There is a team member who knows how to conduct an investigation.
 - **Language skills:** Are there special language skills needed for some interviews?
 - **Special expertise:** If children are involved, only those well-versed in interviewing children, such as a child psychologist, should participate in those interviews.
- **Response team:** This should include only those who will make decisions on outcomes and disciplinary procedures, and have authority to take the necessary actions during the investigation (require interviewees to stop regular work). It will not necessarily include the subject of the complaint's supervisor.

1. USAID encourages implementing partners to report credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse to the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG), as well as to closely consult with the cognizant agreement officer/contracting officer and mission director. See USAID [Fact sheet: Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse](#).

Identify risks in the investigation process

- **Safety risks:** Decide how best to protect the victim/survivor, in accordance with their wishes. (See also below on support services for victim/survivor and interim steps for the subject of the complaint). Decide how best to protect community members and other staff from potential future harm, and what safety concerns there are for witnesses and investigators.
- **Operational and program:** Decide whether the investigation requires a temporary suspension of activities. How will that affect the community? How can the investigation be conducted with the least interference with activities, while also ensuring the safety of community members and staff? What sort of information should be shared to avoid unnecessarily alarming staff and the community?
- **Legal:** There is also the risk that the subject of the complaint may take legal action against the organization, and may have grounds to do so if proper procedures were not followed and there was not compliance with applicable laws. In some cases, there may also be a risk to the victim/survivor of a defamation claim.
- **Reputation and media:** Confidentiality by team members is extremely important and should be stressed because rumors can circulate in the communities, affecting the population's trust in the agency, and even making media headlines. A robust investigation response will help ensure the organization does not receive further negative attention, besides that already generated by the incident itself.

Identify support services for victim/survivor

- **Medical and psychosocial services:** Map services in the area prior to any incidents so that such a referral and contact information can be offered to a victim/survivor as soon possible. If the referral requires the organization to reach out to the service provider on behalf of the victim/survivor, the victim/survivor must consent to the sharing of their information.

Identify interim steps for subject of the complaint

- **How serious is the alleged misconduct?** The more serious, the more you should consider suspension to avoid potential further harm.
- **Has the subject of the complaint threatened the victims/survivors or witnesses?** If threats of retaliation or of more serious harm have been made, consider suspension.
- **How affected is the victim/survivor by the misconduct?** It may be particularly traumatic for a staff member to continue working alongside the subject of the complaint pending the investigation. If necessary, suspend the subject of the complaint as suspension of the victim/survivor could be seen as retaliation for them making the report. Should the victim/survivor request leave, this should be honored.
- **Can people be protected by reassigning the subject of the complaint during the investigation?** For instance, if the subject of the complaint has been accused of unsuccessful attempts to exploit program participants, preventing their access to the field and interaction with participants may be appropriate. This will enable more information to be gathered before the subject of the complaint is informed of the allegations.
- **Suspension of the subject of the complaint will likely require an explanation.** At a minimum, the subject of the complaint will need to be informed of the nature of the allegations and the policies potentially violated, even if not interviewed at the time of suspension. That can suggest to them who may have filed a report against them.

Identify the documents to be reviewed

Safeguarding investigations are typically people-centered, but documents can help corroborate facts, such as times and locations, and provide more context for the investigators to understand the circumstances in which the allegations arose. Documents can also help identify gaps in procedures on corrective measures so that the risk of similar misconduct can be reduced in the future. To protect confidentiality, documents should be requested by senior managers for broader review reasons. Usually, the request should include a broad range so as to limit speculation by those outside the investigation around why they are being requested.

- **Relevant program documents:** If an investigator is not familiar with the program in which the allegations originated, program documents, such as programmatic reports and standard operating procedures will give them an understanding of the scope of program activities and help them understand the rules in place, whether those were followed, and whether that was a contributing factor for the safeguarding violation occurring.
- **Relevant records, lists, logs and attendance sheets:** Corroborating time, place and individuals involved through records or other documents can be helpful evidence. Significant gaps in record keeping or apparent falsification of documents could also be relevant to the investigation.
- **Human Resources files for the relevant parties:** Review HR files for dates of hire, instances of prior misconduct, signed policies (such as code of conduct), and training attendance records on relevant policies.
- **Review public social media postings:** Review public postings on social media, where the subject of the complaint may unknowingly have posted incriminating images or messages.
- **Any documents provided by victim/survivor and/or witnesses:** Victim/survivors may share screenshots of text messages, email messages, social media messages, etc. Similarly, witnesses may be “friends” with the subjects of the complaint on social media, and may be able to provide screenshots of images that might not be publicly available.
- **Searches of emails and phone records:** When appropriate, and consistent with internal policies, searches can be conducted of email records and phone/text logs (where the organization pays for phone bills and receives the records directly). Searches should be done using specific time periods, specific persons in the “to” and “from” lines, and relevant keyword terms.

Identify the interviewees, order of interviews and place

- **Interviewees and order of interviews:** Generally, first interview the person making the allegation (who may also be the victim/survivor), then the witnesses, the subject of the complaint and any additional witnesses the subject of the complaint identifies. When the subject of the complaint is immediately suspended, it may be necessary to interview them earlier on. Some investigators prefer this approach, as the subject's statement is placed on record and can be held against contrary evidence during a second interview. However, there may be a concern that giving the subject of the complaint too much detail at the start of the investigation may allow them to influence other witnesses. These issues should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Here are some considerations:
 - **Most detailed accounts:** Who has indicated that they have the most detail to share about the allegations? Interview them early in the process.
 - **Most cooperative witnesses:** Who seems to be in possession of information that could aid the investigation and appears now, or has in the past been, willing to help counter misconduct. Those closest to the subject of the complaint may share with them information from the investigator. Thus, get as much detail from cooperating witnesses to identify when associates of the subject of the complaint may be providing information contrary to that supplied by most witnesses, and undermining their own credibility.
 - **Interview most team members:** To prevent the reporter of an allegation from being identified, the investigation team may decide to interview all colleagues who work closely with the reporter and not just the witnesses. This helps deflect attention away from a single individual.
- **Interview the subject of the complaint when you have sufficient detail of allegations:** While it may be helpful to interview the subject of the complaint early to place their statement on record so it can be held against later contrary information, it is only helpful when there is sufficient information to credibly make the allegation. If there is a detailed account from the start from the victim/survivor, interview the subject of the complaint earlier in the process, especially if suspending them. However, you may need more details from witnesses to understand the full breadth and scope of the allegations in order to ask appropriate questions.
- **Be cautious about sharing too many details with the subject of the complaint or their close associates if there are safety concerns:** There may be significant security concerns in the community for the victim/survivor or witnesses that may limit the information you can share with the subject of the complaint. Yet, for the subject of the complaint to adequately respond, it is necessary to give them sufficient information of the allegations against them. It can be difficult to balance these needs: you are not required to identify the witnesses; you only need to ask questions about whether or not the subject engaged in certain behaviors, without naming names, which they can either admit or deny. Always prioritize protecting the victim/survivor and witnesses when their physical safety could be at issue.

■ **Place:**

- **When interviewing community members, ensure the location is safe and private.** You may not want to interview them in your office due to concerns for their safety and well-being. If you meet in a public place, ensure there is some privacy so that your conversation can't be overheard.
- **If interviewing other staff, conducting the interview in the office may be appropriate, as observers would not be able to single out the reporter.** Nevertheless, ensure the interview room is private and that confidential conversations cannot be overheard. If you are only interviewing a few staff member witnesses, conduct the interviews as discretely as possible, which may mean conducting them away from the office.

Identify the resources needed

- **People:** Account for the time staff will need to prepare investigation plans, conduct interviews, take notes, update the response team and finalize the investigation report. If this is not their full-time job, they may need other team members to do some of their work. Also keep in mind the time needed by interviewees to participate and how that impacts on daily and weekly workplans.
- **Travel and interview locations:** Do people need to travel to conduct interviews? Keep in mind those logistical arrangements and the best place to conduct interviews, and whether an off-site, confidential location needs to be identified.
- **Document requests:** Keep in mind the time it may take to secure documents for review.

Identify a timeline (or estimate) for the investigation

While an investigation should be started and concluded as quickly as possible, there are often unforeseen issues, such as the ability to secure the availability of a trained investigator, new witnesses arising, and the necessary time for document review and writing an investigation report, especially when juggling other duties. Be realistic about the duties of your staff when setting the timeline. The more complicated cases may take longer.

- **Period for review of related documents and materials:** This may need more or less time, depending on how well the investigator knows the context and circumstances of your work, and whether there is a lot of analysis of documents.
- **Interview time period:** It is best to conduct all interviews within a limited period, as word will get around quickly.
- **Investigation report finalization:** Consider the length of time needed to compile the final report.

Identify communication plans

While each communication plan does not need to be done in great detail, it is important to think about the different messages you need to share with different audiences, while maintaining the greatest amount of confidentiality.

- **Updates for response team:** In outlining communication plans, it is important to discuss how the investigation team will regularly update the response team, especially when security, confidentiality or issues arise during the investigation that need senior management support. Depending on the seriousness of the allegations, daily to bi-weekly (twice a week) updates could be scheduled, with at least one member of the investigation team and one member of the response team.
- **Communication with victim/survivor:** It is important to designate a single point of contact with the victim/survivor. After their initial interview, it is important to provide a rough timeline of how long the investigation is expected to take, and when they can expect to hear back with an update. It is also important to provide regular updates to the victim/survivor, especially if the timeline changes. While results of investigations, including disciplinary actions, are typically confidential, it is becoming more common to share the final results with the victim/survivor so they understand what happened in the case. In cases involving sexual harassment of a staff member, it is also becoming more common to ask the victim/survivor about their expectations for resolution of the case, especially if they would like to explore a restorative resolution process.
- **Communication with the subject of the complaint:** If the subject of the complaint is suspended, they should be informed of the nature of the allegations (from a code of conduct violation to mentioning the specific policy provisions), with the specificity depending on the need to protect witnesses/gather more information balanced with procedural concerns in policies and required by applicable law.
- **Communication with impacted team:** Sometimes allegations require interviewing a whole team, and even suspending activities to do so. That team deserves transparent communication—even if that communication simply describes that there have been some allegations received, explains that they must be followed up on, and that the team's cooperation is expected. Explain that you can't share more, because these types of inquiries are always confidential.
- **Communication with all staff in the organization:** Similarly, a certain amount of transparency with the entire staff may be required, as the investigation may become public. This depends on the degree to which investigative actions can be done discretely as opposed to becoming common knowledge. Remember that in the absence of communication, people will speculate. This is a chance to send the message that the organization takes such allegations very seriously, will act swiftly with investigations and ensure anyone who has violated policies and expectations about safe and professional behavior will receive appropriate sanctions.

OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT OF INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

Allow independence of the investigation team, with regular updates, including requests for additional support, with the response team. While the investigation team should be allowed to do its work reviewing documents and conducting interviews, regular updates with the response team can help identify any additional resources needed and any additional documents for review, and allow continual review of safety and confidentiality concerns that may arise.

Revise the investigation plan with additional interviews and document requests as needed. The investigation team should allow sufficient time in the schedule planning to accommodate additional interviews with persons of interest who are identified during the interview process. The investigation plan can be continually revisited to add additional allegations, documents, evidence reviewed, and interviews conducted.

CONCLUDING AN INVESTIGATION

The investigation team prepares factual findings and can make recommendations on conclusions of violation of policy, disciplinary sanctions and corrective measures.

Factual findings

The bulk of the work of an investigation is making factual findings.

- **Use a reasonable inference standard:** To determine whether something did or did not happen, use a reasonable inference standard: it is also called a “more likely than not” standard. When drawing those reasonable inferences, also look to possible motives and logical inconsistencies. Does the explanation make sense, especially if all other evidence leads to another inference?
- **Corroboration of evidence:** Major facts should always have some corroborating evidence: another witness; written documentation; another person recounting events close in time to the actual occurrence that are consistent with the current story. Not every element may be able to be corroborated, because these types of incidents usually occur in private and without witnesses. But often there is a pattern of conduct leading up to it, or parts of the behavior that can be corroborated. That type of corroboration lends credibility to the victim/survivor and/or witnesses. When most of the victim/survivor’s story can be corroborated, by reasonable inference, you can conclude that the part which no one else observed likely happened.
- **Citing contradictions and untruths:** In addition to citing the corroboration aspects, be sure to point out when people’s stories are contradicted by nearly every other witness. People who are not telling the truth begin by lying about minor details that they don’t think they should admit to (but actually don’t matter to the investigators). When they tell what is clearly a lie about something unimportant, it casts doubt on their credibility.

Conclusions

- **Substantiated:** After analyzing the factual findings, is it more likely than not that there was a policy violation? Do the facts add up to the definition of sexual exploitation or abuse or sexual harassment? *More likely than not* means that one version of the story is more probable than the other, because there is sufficient corroboration of sufficient details (not necessarily all).
- **Unsubstantiated:** After analyzing factual findings, is it more likely than not that there was NOT a policy violation? When the facts are added together, was there NOT a policy violation? *More likely than not* means that one version of the story is more probable than the other, because there is sufficient corroboration of sufficient details (not necessarily all). These are the cases in which either the facts as stated and corroborated by the victim/survivor or witnesses did not violate policy OR it is more likely than not that NONE of the facts alleged occurred at all. This can border on a malicious complaint if filed by a staff member, and could be considered for a separate investigation and disciplinary sanctions if the person knowingly lied.
- **Unsubstantiated for insufficient evidence (inconclusive):** This is a common finding: the evidence presented by the victim/survivor is compelling and credible, but there is no way to independently corroborate any detail provided. It still leaves concerns of potential misconduct, and there is often lesser, substantiated misconduct that can be corroborated and potentially disciplined.

Response team needs to take ownership of conclusions, disciplinary measures and corrective measures

Consider disciplinary sanctions

- **Ensure compliance with applicable laws:** While the investigation may reach the threshold required by the organization's internal standards for employment to be terminated, some countries' laws may require more proof before this can occur.
- **Weigh up these factors:**
 - Seriousness of the misconduct (exploitation, violence, extreme harassment)
 - Prior misconduct
 - Frequency of misconduct
 - Position of the subject of the complaint: the higher their position, the greater is their obligation to treat people with respect and dignity
 - Internal procedures and practices
 - Ability to accept responsibility and reform versus continued denial
- **Consider possible sanctions:**
 - Termination of employment
 - Unpaid suspension
 - Demotion and/or ineligibility for promotions for prescribed time period
 - Transfer of duties and/or location
 - Warning letter to file
 - Training requirements
 - Counseling requirements
 - Performance plan
 - Participation in restorative resolutions

■ **Corrective measures**

Look at ways to mitigate future occurrences of such behavior:

- Trainings with staff on policies
- Awareness sessions with program participants and communities on their rights and responsibilities, including how to report concerns about programs or staff
- Strengthening feedback, complaints and response mechanisms in communities
- Strengthening internal reporting systems on staff misconduct
- Ensuring gender balance in recruiting staff in the field and to positions of authority
- Adjusting procedures and protocols to ensure staff are not alone with program participants of the opposite sex
- Reinforcing trainings for managers for red-flag behavior that they should stop before it escalates

Tool 4 Example investigation management worksheet

Issue	Who	What	When	Where
Consider whether a vague allegation needs further information before being deemed credible				
Mark donor notifications, where necessary				
Establish investigation and response teams				
Conduct risk analysis on safety concerns and program activities				
Decide whether support services are needed for victim/survivor				
Identify interim steps for the subject of the complaint				
Identify documents for review				
Identify interviewees, including place and order				
Identify timeline				
Identify resources needed				

Update plan between investigation team and response team, including on security concerns				
Plan for communication with victim/survivor				
Plan for communication with impacted team				
Plan for communication with all staff				
Plan for communication with the subject of the complaint				
Ensure continued oversight and support of investigation steps (interviews and document review)				
Conclude the investigation with findings, conclusions and recommendations in investigation report				
Implement disciplinary sanctions				
Implement corrective measures				

Tool 5 Investigation plan

Date: Date prepared

Case number: Using internal case-numbering system

Location: Specific office/location involved

Investigation team: Names of people involved in the investigation process: those conducting interviews and analyzing information

Response team: Names of people involved in managing the investigation, including obtaining the necessary resources, securing any needed resources/documents for review in a discrete manner, and making decisions on the outcomes (conclusions of policy violation, disciplinary sanctions and details of corrective measures).

Investigation objective

“To examine the facts and circumstances and determine the accuracy, scope, and completeness of the allegations and, if true, to ensure that the full scope of the misconduct is identified, appropriately addressed and corrective measures put in place.”

Allegations

Each potential incident and/or policy violation should be identified separately and numbered. A brief citation of the potential policy violation should also be included. Try to write briefly, concentrating on who, what, when, where, how it was reported, and how it is known, if reported by a third party.

- **Complainants** (where known) If there are specific concerns about security, their names could be withheld in this document and referred to by status (staff, female program participant, male child program participant, etc.)
- **Subject of the complaint** Name, position and program (if relevant)
- **Steps taken prior to current investigation phase** Here it is important to detail the steps that were taken prior to preparing the investigation plan. Include date, action, involved persons in chronological order.
 - For instance, if there needed to be a clarifying conversation with a reporter, or if there was an awareness session done with staff that produced more specific allegations against a specific staff member.
 - It should include any referral support you provided to the victim/survivor, and advice on the right to file a criminal complaint if criminal conduct was involved.
 - Steps taken for safety concerns or to protect the integrity of the investigation should be listed: it can include suspension or reassignment of the subject(s); leave granted to victims/survivors; no-contact orders for the subject of the complaint with victim/survivor.
 - It should also include any reports to donor agencies about the allegations.

Donors and grants potentially affected

For the subject of the complaint, identify the donors and grants that fund their salary. Where donors have mandatory reporting requirements, ensure that the donor notification step is included above.

Investigation approach

Background and context

This can be more relevant for investigators who may not be familiar with the local context of the program and operations. The investigation team will begin by obtaining an understanding of the potential timeframe, operational context, and environment in place as they relate to the allegations. Activities will include the following:

1. Finalize a timeline showing:

- Tenure and relationship of key staff
- Key events (complaints, security incidents, extended absences, etc.)
- Timing of the issues cited in the allegations or otherwise related to the allegations

2. Review:

- Local policies and procedures to understand roles, authority level and reporting lines of each staff
- Any programmatic documents about the scope of the program affected

Specific allegations

After obtaining an understanding of the background and context, the investigation team will examine the allegations to determine the extent to which policies may not have been followed and whether wrongdoing occurred. As each allegation is addressed, the scope of the investigation may need to be expanded.

1. Document review: Can include things such as:

- HR files for subject of the complaint, complainants, and reporters (where relevant)
- Standard operating procedures for applicable program activities
- Standard procedures for operational activities (procurement, finance, logistics, etc.)
- Safety and security protocols
- Logs of complaints for the feedback, complaints and response mechanisms
- Monitoring and evaluation reports, especially survey results and/or raw data from surveys
- Drivers' logs, guesthouse logs, invoices, expense reports, program participant distribution lists, program participant registration lists, training attendance sheets, etc.
- Documents or documentation provided by reporters or witnesses

2. Interviews: List all identified persons for interview known at the beginning of the investigation. Additional interviewees may be identified as the investigation proceeds. Refer to *Interviewing tips and techniques* and *Checklist for managing investigations* for tips on scheduling the order of interviews.
3. Electronic records, if needed: Should the investigator determine it is warranted, access to and review of emails or phone records that might contain evidence of the wrongdoing will be obtained, in accordance with local law.
4. Investigation timetable: Investigations can change and run into obstacles, so try to include broad and realistic ranges for things such as document review, conducting interviews and finalizing the report.

Tool 6 The PEACE model of investigation interviews

The PEACE model was developed in the early 1990s as a collaborative effort between law enforcement and psychologists in England and Wales. It was conceived as a way to reduce the number of false confessions that were resulting from an overly aggressive style of interviewing. PEACE stands for Prepare and Plan, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure and Evaluation.

Prepare and Plan

Before beginning any investigation interview, ensure you have deep knowledge of the case.

- Create a schedule of topics you will need to cover.
- Identify the purpose, aims and objectives of the interview.
- Decide what needs to be proven or clarified, what evidence is available and where it is, and how to get any other evidence needed.

Engage and Explain

- Build rapport with the interview subject by introducing yourself and anyone else present and explain the purpose of the interview.
- Engage the interview subject in conversation to set a relaxed and non-confrontational tone that makes the subject feel comfortable and willing to communicate.

Account

Find out what happened by asking your interview subject to recall the event in full detail.

Encourage the subject's recollection using one or both of these two methods:

- **Cognitive approach** Ask the subject to describe the event. Don't interrupt or ask leading questions, but use pauses to encourage the subject to fill in gaps. Then, ask them to recall the event again, but in reverse order or from a different perspective.
- **Conversation management** Ask the subject to tell you what happened. Then divide the story into sections and ask for more detail about each section. Probe and summarize each segment to fill in all the gaps. Ask the subject to clarify any contradictory information.

Closure

- Summarize the main points of the subject's account and allow them to correct errors or provide additional information to clarify any inconsistencies.
- Answer questions and address any concerns they may have. Thank the subject and explain the next steps.

Evaluation

Evaluate each interview and the information provided. Take this opportunity to reflect on your performance and identify areas where you need to improve.

- Did you achieve your objectives?
- Were you successful in building rapport?
- Do you need to conduct more interviews or make other inquiries?

Tool 7 Interviewing tips and techniques

Preparing for interviews

- **Topics to be covered:** Be sure you have as much information as possible about the details of the allegations: dates, times, places, words used, actions done, witnesses present or nearby, who else the victim/survivor spoke to about the incident, etc. Prepare a question list, but don't forget to ask follow-up questions for the necessary details. Understand the details of the allegations and pursue this as an exercise in gathering the full story from different perspectives. A good interviewer requires good critical thinking skills to respond to statements made, and should not simply follow a list of questions.
- **Review documents as much as possible prior to conducting interviews:** If dates on logs, statements made in text messages, or other such information can be helpful to corroborating and/or establishing facts, it is good to review it prior to relevant interviews, if possible. If that is not an option, ask the interviewee if they could attend a potential second interview, should there be any additional questions or help you might need.

Establishing rapport



Thank the witness for attending the interview

Thank you for coming today and speaking to us/me. We very much appreciate your willingness to speak with us today and help us.



Introduce yourself Explain who you are, offer your card with contact details, and introduce any other investigators, observers or interpreters present.



Honesty and accuracy Staff have a duty to cooperate and an obligation to tell the truth. For witnesses who are not staff members, simply thank them for their time and explain it is important for them to be accurate.



Confidentiality Staff members have an obligation to refrain from communicating with other persons interviewed in the framework of the same investigation. Explain that the investigation process is confidential for both witnesses and investigators alike. Describe who you are, as the investigator, and who you may have to share information with and why. If they are staff witnesses, explain that breaching confidentiality can result in disciplinary measures. Non-staff witnesses cannot be obliged to maintain confidentiality, but the investigator should explain the importance of confidentiality to a fair process.



Purpose of note-taking

Explain who will be taking the notes, e.g. the interviewer or the second interviewer. Explain that the purpose of taking notes is to ensure accuracy when the investigation report is written up and to offer the witness a chance to verify the accuracy of what is written in the statement.



Acceptable to state when answer is not known

Clarify to the witness that it is acceptable if they cannot remember or do not know a particular piece of information.



Fine to ask for short break

Tell the witness where the bathroom facilities are, offer them water, and explain that they can ask for a short break if they need it.



Open with general questions Start by asking non-threatening questions to put people at their ease. *For staff*, usually start by asking how long they have been employed by the organization, the types of roles they have had and what their current duties are. Ask for some detail about their current duties and how they carry out their work, in preparation for more pointed questions later about whether they have any concerns about other staff in specific types of activities or behaviors. *For non-staff*, ask them a bit about themselves, their background, and how long they have been living in the community.

Free narrative technique

Approach the interview as if you were a journalist seeking to understand what happened, not a police officer trying to coerce a guilty confession.



Research has shown that people who are telling the truth generally have a lot of details to share, and are very willing to do so when given the chance to speak freely.

“Opening the door”

Sometimes, you may not be sure what a witness may have to share, and whether they will be truly confident about their statement. Ask them if there is anything that they have seen that raises concerns that they would like to share with the investigator. They will likely tell you the story and what they know about the allegations without you ever having to ask them directly.

Conversation management

While it is important to let people tell their story, you may need to interrupt them from time to time to ensure that you get all the necessary details: who was present, what happened, what was said, when and for how long, where, how they know this. For every piece of evidence stated, you should at least try to have the interviewee cover all of these points, to the best of their ability. Exact dates can be hard to remember, if not documented, but sometimes, even rough estimates of time periods can be helpful in setting the stage.

Specific questions

In some settings, the interviewee may already know what you are investigating and you can begin by asking more specific questions. Some may need further encouragement in the areas you are exploring. When you move onto specific questions, there are two types:

- **Open:** For example, *How did things go in distribution in the last month? Did anything concerning happen? How are the gender dynamics in the office? or Tell me about the events that happened last Wednesday afternoon at the office.*
- **Closed:** These are questions that ask for specific details, and are usually part of follow-up questions or conversation management: For example, *Who else was present? Did you personally witness these events? Where were you standing?*

Details on small incidents or minor things can be telling

When some witnesses give you small details about behaviors that could be connected to misconduct, but are not misconduct in themselves, subjects of the complaint may even deny those in their attempt to avoid all suspicion, even though there is overwhelming evidence that those actions took place. Such lies, even minor ones, can undermine their credibility and should be taken into account when weighing the evidence.

Special considerations when interviewing victims/survivors



Keep away from “why” questions and use “what” questions instead.



Take breaks if there are signs of retraumatization.



Convey empathy while maintaining an objective view of the facts.



Recognize that their experience and telling their story has had an impact on them.



Explain the process without making promises and explain when there will be an update.



Let them know who they can contact if they have questions.



Especially in the case of staff, ask about what they would like to see happen.



Ascertain their safety concerns and whether they need medical or psychosocial support services.

Be sure you have the details

- The details are vital as they can be corroborated by documentation or other witnesses.
- Consider asking an interviewee to draw a scene or occurrence; those who are lying may have a harder time drawing and keeping the story consistent.
- Be sure to periodically repeat statements and facts back to the interviewee to ensure that you are capturing details correctly.

Be strategic with confrontational questions

- Providing information at the beginning of an interview can allow the subject of the complaint to quickly craft an alibi consistent with the evidence.
- Don't challenge the person until the end.
- At the end, present the person with inconsistencies, incriminating statements, and/or incriminating evidence.
- At the challenge stage, present the evidence piece by piece; don't overwhelm them with all of incriminating evidence at once.
- Sharing the evidence incrementally increases the likelihood that a person will make additional inconsistent statements.

Summary and closure

Examples of statements and questions with which to close the discussion:

- *I am going to sum up now, please tell me if I get anything wrong.*
- *I have summarized what I think I heard you say. Did I leave anything out? Would you like to correct anything?*
- *Do you have any questions for me?*
- *Thank you for your time.*
- *Is it okay to contact you again if I have any further questions?*

Tool 8 Investigation report template

Executive summary

An executive summary is a concise overview of the investigation from inception to conclusions and recommendations, and is only necessary when the report is long. The summary provides the key talking points for those in senior positions to understand the basic results of the investigation. It should be written last, and address the following points, in brief:

- Allegations
- Time period of investigative actions
- Factual findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations (including disciplinary sanctions)

Allegations

This is a summary of the allegations, as contained in the investigation plan. If additional allegations surface during the course of the investigation, they should also be added, with an explanation of how they arose. If there are multiple allegations, each should be listed with a separate heading, and discussed and analyzed separately, even if some of the evidence is overlapping.

Investigation and response teams

List the members of the investigation and response teams.

Background of activities

As the report may be shared with donors, include a couple of short paragraphs about the scope of work of the organization generally, and a brief description of the program in which the allegations arose.

Steps taken prior to investigation

This can be taken from the investigation plan, adding in any additional steps that were taken after the investigation plan was written, but before the investigation began.

Relevant policies and procedures

Include excerpts of the applicable policies that may have been violated. Mention the relevant procedures, protocols, etc., to identify what is working, and what needs corrective measures.

Investigative measures taken

List:

- Documents reviewed, detailing any specific analysis, and attach annexes of spreadsheets or other data that is analyzed
- Names and positions of interviewees
- Any notable challenges in conducting the investigation (unavailable witnesses, documents, etc.)

Factual findings

This is the most important part of the investigation report, as the main task of investigators is to gather the evidence and determine the facts. Instead of necessarily grouping by allegations, one approach is to list each fact with an independent heading, and if there are sub-points to those facts, create a separate heading.

For each fact and heading, describe the main evidence that supports that factual finding. Identify corroborating evidence in other witness statements or documents. Present any evidence, such as statements to the contrary. Draw logical and fair factual findings based on the evidence. You can consider both motives and logical inconsistencies. Remember the standard is reasonable inference, which means which story is more likely.

Reports are more manageable when broken down fact-by-fact rather than reciting all of one person's story and then another's. Tell the story, fact by fact.

Use this chart to help track what the facts are, what corroborates them, what is contrary to them and whether that is corroborated. This should be kept separately from the investigation report, but can be a helpful tool when working toward corroborating factual findings using a logical and consistent method.

Fact	In support of	Corroboration	Contrary to	Corroboration	Finding

Recommendations

Conclusions

In most cases, you will discuss your factual findings with the response team to determine whether you can conclude that there has been a policy violation. They will ask you to include those conclusions in the final report. If the factual findings have been clearly explained, the conclusion section is just determining whether those facts meet the definition of a policy violation. The choices are substantiated, unsubstantiated, or unsubstantiated for insufficient evidence (inconclusive).

Disciplinary sanctions

If there was minor policy violation, a severe disciplinary measure does not need to be imposed. Some managers may want to minimize disciplinary measures if there was a policy violation on a minor issue. However, it can send the wrong message to the victim/survivor if there is a lack of understanding of how the disciplinary measures are applied. All sanctions should always be proportionate to the severity of the misconduct.

Ensure compliance with applicable laws: While the investigation may reach the threshold required by the organization's internal standards for employment to be terminated, some countries' laws may require more proof before this can occur.

See *Considering disciplinary actions* above.

PSEA Emergency Simulation Exercise

Practical guidance for conducting a PSEA emergency simulation (SIMEX)



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); and (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.

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.

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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 through 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.

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.



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

Expected outputs

Operation/functions tested	EXERCISE 1: Feedback, complaints and response mechanism
Documenting the handling of the sensitive feedback process	<p>Expected outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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	<p>Expected outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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	<p>Expected outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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	<p>Expected outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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 methodology is in line with COVID-19 requirements and simulates real working conditions. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>CRS tasks:</p> <p>Simulation team leader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>CRS tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. 	<p>SIMEX PowerPoint</p> <p>Task 0: Scenarios Background HO 00</p> <p>HO 1: General emergency scenario HO 2: Specific project scenario</p>

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	<p>Expected outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>CRS tasks:</p> <p>Simulation team leader joins each separate call for a period of time.</p> <p>Two scorers facilitate the session in separate calls for each partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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 <i>HO 3: FCRM SEA complaint</i> 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. 	<p>HO 3: FCRM SEA complaint</p> <p>FCRM documents adopted by the organization (SOPs for FCRM, organizational chart, job descriptions, TORs, etc.)</p> <p>Score cards</p>
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	<p>Handling SEA reports from staff: Expected outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>Initiating investigation – Director Expected outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>Director takes immediate actions for victim/survivor protection. Expected outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. 	<p>HO 4: Staff SEA report Score cards</p> <p>Internal reporting and investigation documents adopted by the organization (SOPs for IRIS, organizational chart, job descriptions, TORs, etc.)</p> <p>Referral pathway documents for victim/survivor support</p>

Session topic	Duration	Mode	Facilitation methodology	Materials/ handouts
Investigation team prepares for its upcoming activities			<p>Investigation team prepares for its upcoming activities</p> <p>Expected outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develops investigation plan. <p>CRS tasks:</p> <p>Simulation team leader joins each separate call for a period of time.</p> <p>Two scorers facilitate the session in separate calls for each partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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 <i>HO 4: Staff SEA report</i> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>CRS tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. 	<p>SIMEX PowerPoint</p> <p>Participant feedback form</p>
SIMEX management team session	1 hour	Plenary in a separate CRS SIMEX MS Teams call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. <p>Team decides on the roles to provide SIMEX feedback, scores and recommendations to the partners in an accompaniment session.</p>	

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