

Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

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Content

1. Statement of Commitment.....	2
2. Purpose & Objectives	2
3. Scope.....	2
4. Six Core Principles of IASC	2
5. Rules of Conduct	3
6. Reporting Responsibilities & Sanctions	3
7. Feedback & revision	4
8. ANNEX.....	5

1. Statement of Commitment

Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe is committed to prevent any form of harm, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) by any of Help’s team members or anyone associated with the delivery of all our work. Our commitment is to safeguard all persons (children and adults) who come into contact with the organization.

We obligate ourselves to nondiscriminatory and respectful behavior, where misconduct is not accepted, where power is not abused, and vulnerabilities and power inequality are not exploited.

It is mandatory to report any suspected or alleged cases of SEAH perpetrated by anyone within the scope of this policy in connection with official duties or business. Help ensures to investigate each reported case thoroughly and take appropriate action.

2. Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to describe the standards of behavior that Help expects from its staff, representatives and partners when it comes to the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It specifies the reporting responsibilities where an incident is identified including the reporting channels as well as the implicitness of investigation of reported incidents.

Help commits to the following objectives:

- Zero tolerance of inaction of incidents of SEAH
- Shared responsibility
- Accountability and transparency
- Victim/survivor-centered approach
- Determination of the best interest of the child in case of child-SEAH cases

3. Scope

Governing body members, staff, volunteers, representatives, contractors and partners are expected to comply with the principles and reporting requirements specified in this Policy.

4. Six Core Principles of IASC

Help has zero tolerance towards all forms of harm including bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse. Help staff, partners and affiliates are requested to follow the **six core principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**¹ in all projects and programs:

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
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 benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or

¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/iasc-six-core-principles-relating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-2019>

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, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Humanitarian workers 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.

5. Rules of Conduct

In order to prevent and manage cases of SEAH, Help commits to the following:

- Set the tone for SEAH already during recruitment and onboarding.
- Raise awareness for SEAH during (mandatory) trainings, briefings and in day-to-day routines.
- Conduct local service mapping and regularly review it.
- Offer reporting channels for SEAH violations.
- Take measure to protect survivors (survivor-centered approach).
- Investigate each SEAH allegation.

Help staff, partners and affiliates are obliged to:

- Obey to the six core principles of IASC mentioned above.
- Recognize the imbalance of power in humanitarian/ development work and refrain from misusing it.
 - In particular this means: Humiliating or exploiting anyone is strictly prohibited. This includes soliciting or receiving sex or sexual favors in exchange for money, employment, aid supplies, goods, or services.
 - The same applies to sexual coercion or obtaining sexual favors through threats or violence.
- Raise awareness for SEAH in their daily work and contribute to an environment that does not tolerate any harm, including SEAH, and facilitates effective reporting channels in case incidents occur.
- Ensure supply/distribution of items and services based on defined criteria and free of demands.
- Refrain from any form of physical or psychological harassment, discrimination, abuse of power or intimidation at work, including by making derogatory or sexual comments or adopting a demeaning attitude.
- Refrain from sexual relationships with project participants since this could be seen as a form of sexual exploitation/ abuse even if it is consensual.
- Refrain from commercial sexual services, even in purely private contexts and in countries where prostitution or the receipt of sexual services are legal.
- Report any suspected or alleged cases of SEAH to the defined complaint focal points in country or HQ.

6. Reporting Responsibilities & Sanctions

It is mandatory to report any suspected or alleged cases of SEAH perpetrated by anyone within the scope of this policy in connection with official duties or business in a timely manner. **Reports should be directed to the complaint focal points in each country office, or to the complaint focal point at Help HQ or to the ombudsperson.** Details can be found in the complaint/ whistleblowing policy.

Help will investigate any reports on SEAH violations following the steps outlined in the complaint/ whistleblowing guideline. Thereby, we use a survivor-centered approach that prioritizes the rights, needs, wishes and empowerment of survivors of SEAH.

Deliberately false accusations will not be tolerated.

Failure to report any suspected or alleged SEAH case or a suspected violation of this Policy constitute a violation of Help's Code of Conduct and of this Policy. Same applies to deliberately false accusations. Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including immediate termination and/or the annulment of contracts and cooperation agreements. Help reserves the right to report criminal offences in compliance with applicable laws.

No Retaliation: No staffer, partner organization or other representative who in good faith reports a violation of a law, rules or regulations, including SEAH, shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

7. Feedback & revision

Feedback on the policy can be addressed to the Document Owner. Revisions will be conducted based on needs or within the defined review period.



Bianca Kaltschmitt, Managing Director

8. ANNEX

Definitions.

The following definitions have been determined by the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee:

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another. (Source: the UN Secretary General’s Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.)

Sexual abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. (Source: the UN Secretary General’s Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.)

Sexual harassment: Unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that can include indecent remarks or sexual demands.

Transactional sex: The exchange of money, employment, goods, services or other benefit for sex, including sexual favors.

Safeguarding: Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments to protect people from exploitation, harm and abuse of all kinds.

Forms of harm arising from any misuse of position, power, authority, or trust:

- Physical abuse (including domestic violence)
- Psychological or Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Economic or commercial exploitation (e.g. child labor, modern slavery)
- Neglect/Omission to act
- Financial/Material abuse
- Discrimination
- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment
- Harmful Cultural Practices
- PSEAH (Donor language)