

Module 1: PSEA Basics

Facilitation Guide

Purpose: Module 1 is designed to engage participants through simple exercises to understand what actions and behaviors constitute sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of beneficiaries and that they develop an appreciation of the personal stake they have in upholding their Agency's Code of Conduct.

Training Audience: This module can be used as an introductory training unit with field-based new hires [front-line staff, volunteers, etc] and also as a quick refresher course. The unit can also be inserted into focus-group discussions with beneficiaries. For discussion with beneficiaries, omit Session 2, as the latter is relevant to humanitarian staff. Rather, focus on explaining to beneficiaries about their right to be free from SEA and the good conduct that they should expect from staff [i.e. explain that your Agency has a strict standard regarding Staff Conduct and that beneficiaries have a right to expect this level of good conduct and therefore, a right to bring forward any concerns where staff are not upholding the expected conduct].

Timing: Depending on the audience, this module may take 60 minutes [e.g. senior management] or go to 180 minutes [programming staff; beneficiaries; partners]. A key part of tailoring this training is assessing the audience's needs and then deciding how much time to devote to each of the three sessions in this module.

Materials: If needed, the Agency Code of Conduct and Handout 2 should be translated into the relevant local language. If this is not possible, it will be important to have a co-facilitator who can provide oral translations of these materials, for those who are not able to work in English, if you the trainer cannot do this.

Agenda:

Session 1: Understanding SEA

- Opening Discussion
- Handout 1: Definitions Page
- Discussion

Session 2: The Six Core Principles/Code of Conduct (CoC)

- Presentation of your agency's CoC
- Compare to IASC Principles
- Discussion

Session 3: Code of Conduct Violations: Illustrative examples

- Handout 2: Brief Scenarios
- Small Group Work
- Plenary Discussion

Session 1: Understanding SEA

In this opening session participants will gain a better understanding of what is meant by SEA and related terms. Participants will be given a brief introduction to the terminology and will receive a handout with the various definitions.

Ask participants what they think SEA means. Make sure you create a comfortable setting where participants feel “safe” to talk about this sensitive issue. Do not be judgmental. It is culturally appropriate to talk about SEA and of our responsibility to act and behave in a way that is fully respectful of the dignity of the beneficiaries.

Read aloud [or ask someone in the room to read aloud] the formal definition of sexual exploitation. Then ask for suggestions of examples of this. Below are ideas to share with the group.

Examples of Sexual Exploitation

- A head teacher at a school, employed by an NGO, who refuses to allow a displaced child to enter his school unless her mother sleeps with him.
- A UN driver who regularly provides rides in the official UN vehicle to village schoolboys travelling to school in a neighboring town, in exchange for him taking photographs of them posing naked.
- The female boss of an NGO office, refusing to give employment to a young man applying to be a kitchen server unless he sleeps with her. (*Remember: even if the young man refuses to sleep with her, if she attempts to abuse her position by making such a request, she is guilty of sexual exploitation*)
- It also includes situations where a staff member or related personnel facilitate SEA, while not directly engaging in the abuse or exploitation. For example: A peacekeeper is requested by his superior officer to encourage a female member of the local population to engage in a sexual relationship with him in exchange for small sums of money.

Read aloud the definition of sexual abuse. Again, ask the group to offer examples of this.

Examples of Sexual Abuse

- A refugee, who is employed as an incentive worker by WFP, lures a female refugee collecting food to a deserted warehouse and rapes her, announcing that he will tell her husband they are having an affair if she reports the case.
- A local Red cross worker touches a 6-year-old girl inappropriately while playing with her as part of a psycho-social intervention.
- Solicitation of a prostitute.

Ask participants what are our responsibilities vis-à-vis beneficiaries. These are some of the key points you want to underline throughout the discussion.

1. We always work in areas that are affected by conflicts, disasters and poverty, where people will do everything to access food or get some services.
2. We have power. By driving our big white cars and distributing assistance we are perceived as people who have power. There is always a power imbalance between NGO workers and beneficiaries. It is easy to misunderstand and take advantage of beneficiaries' vulnerability.

3. Make sure participants understand the difference between SEA of beneficiaries, wider GBV issues and sexual harassment.
4. In many cases our staff do not perceive engaging with prostitutes as SEA. They feel there is a consent and clarity when it comes to the terms of the transaction. It is a service they pay for and no one – girls or boys - is forced to engage. Remind them of the power imbalance and that we work in highly vulnerable context where people will do anything to survive and feed their families. Many times staff will use as a justification to engage with prostitutes the fact they are away from families and they have biological needs. Ask what systems and procedures does your agency have in place to address the issue of prolonged separation from families. (e.g. R&R)
5. Remind participants that they are on duty “24/7” [i.e. there is no time when you are not bound by it]. And that they are required to uphold the obligations, when it comes to SEA, even outside their official working hours.

At the end of Session 1, hand out the Definitions page, as they will need it for the next Session.

Session 2: The Six Core Principles/Agency Code of Conduct

This session will introduce the IASC’s Six Core Principles and give facilitators a chance to match it against their own Agency’s Code of Conduct. The goal is to outline the obligations of humanitarian staff as a result of signing their Code of Conduct. This session may be omitted if the primary audience for the training is beneficiaries or community members.

Start the session by asking the group if they have signed the Code of Conduct? Ask those that have signed it to raise their hands. Now, ask those that have not signed the Code of Conduct to raise their hands. Ask those that have answered YES to ‘signing’ if they remember what is in the Code of Conduct.

Now, hand out copies of your Agency’s Code of Conduct and ask if they remember signing it [only in sessions with agency staff].

These are some key messages you could include during your presentation. At this stage participants should have sufficient understanding of what SEA is and that the Code of Conduct is one of the tools the humanitarian community has to prevent and sanction cases of SEA of beneficiaries. Ask participants to note where the Agency’s Code of Conduct incorporates the Six Core Principles.

- Who is obligated? All staff are bound by their Agency’s Code of Conduct. ‘Staff’ will be understood to mean anyone employed, contracted or otherwise designated or charged with the provision of goods, products, skills or services to beneficiaries on behalf of their organization whether for pay, a fee for service arrangement, as an in-kind contribution or as a volunteer. This is applicable in emergency and non-emergency contexts; there are no exceptions.
- What are you required to do? All staff (as defined above) are obligated to report any witnessed or alleged act of sexual exploitation and abuse as defined in the code. Even if you think it is only a rumor, you MUST report. It is up to your agencies investigation management team to assess whether there is any merit to the allegation. Emphasize that failure to report constitutes a breach of the Code and the staff person could be subject to punitive measures.

Session 3: Recognizing Code of Conduct Violations

Select one or two of the scenarios found in the scenarios handout for group work. Divide participants into small groups [depending on number of participants, could be groups of 3 or 4 people]. Tell people that they will be given a brief scenario/story to read which highlights issues related to the Code of Conduct. Assign each group one of the two scenarios and tell them that they will be using their Agency's Code of Conduct to answer three questions found on the page with the scenarios.

Hand out the case studies [English or relevant language edition]. Assign 15 minutes for completing the task.

Report out in plenary. Each group will present on their conclusions regarding their case studies.

HANDOUT 2: BRIEF SCENARIOS

In your group, read the scenario you were assigned and then answer the following questions:

- Has the Code of Conduct been breached?
- If so, what rule has been broken?
- What would you do next?

Case Study (Scenarios)

1) **Carlos is one of our logistics officers.** He has helped set up a boys' soccer club in town. Carlos enjoys the soccer games but he seems to particularly enjoy being with local teenagers. He gives presents (magazines, candy, sodas and pens) to many boys. You have heard rumors that he offers these gifts in exchange for sexual acts. However, when you ask around, you are told that the boys making the allegation are always fabricating stories like this. The senior manager who has reported the allegation to you finds it hard to believe as last summer he went on leave with Carlos to Geneva. While in Geneva he and Carlos visited a brothel together.

2) **Joey is a 19 year old driver we hired locally.** He transports relief items from the warehouse to the refugee camp where the items are distributed. On one of his trips he recognized a 17-year-old refugee girl walking on the side of the road and gave her a ride back to the camp. Since then, to impress her, he frequently offers to drive her wherever she is going and sometimes gives her small items from the relief packages in his truck, which he thinks she and her family could use. The last time he drove her home she asked him to come inside her home to meet her family. The family was pleased that she had made friends with a NGO worker. Joey really likes the girl; he wants to start a romantic relationship with her and to ask her parents' permission to marry her. He knows her family will approve.

The local age of consent is 16 years of age and Joey is from the same ethnic group as the young woman.

3) **Josie is a refugee in one of our camps.** Pieter is a refugee we recruited as an incentive worker, to distribute food. He has offered to give Josie a little extra during the distribution if she will be his 'special friend'. She agrees willingly. Both of them agree that they should start a sexual relationship and neither of them thinks that anything is wrong. Josie hopes that the relationship might be a passport to a new life in another country or at least an opportunity to supplement her rations. Pieter does nothing to discourage these hopes.

4) **Darlene is one of our international recruits.** She is always on the lookout for good business opportunities since she has to support her family back home. She has been asked by a local colleague, Stanislaus, to contribute some money towards renovating a bar in the town, in return for a portion of the bar's profits. Darlene soon finds she is getting a steady income from the bar, and gives more money to hire more staff, including security. She does not go to the bar, but knows that there is a lot of prostitution going on there and that UN peacekeepers, as well as NGO and other UN staff use the bar often. However, she doesn't think that concerns her, since she is not directly involved in those issues. She's just glad for the extra money.

Facilitator's Notes/Explanations of the Scenarios

1) **Carlos the logistics officer:** If it is true that Carlos has offered gifts in exchange for sexual acts, then he has abused a position of differential power for sexual purposes. The exchange of money or goods for sexual services violates the standard of conduct expected of NGO staff. Such acts constitute serious misconduct under the IASC's Core Principles [principle 3]. In addition, Carlos is in breach of the Code for performing sexual acts with children (anyone under the age of 18, regardless of the local age of consent). Carlos and the senior manager's visit to a brothel in Geneva also violates the expectation that the Code of Conduct is in force '24/7' and so the exchange of money for sex, even in a European country constitutes violations under the Code of Conduct. Underline the fact that humanitarian workers are held to a strict standard even when they are abroad or not on duty [*The latter may warrant discussion in the group*].

2) **Joey the driver:** under the Code of Conduct, Joey is prohibited from having sexual activity with anyone under 18, regardless of the local age of consent. Moreover, the rules strongly discourage sexual relationships between NGO staff and beneficiaries, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian work. There is an exception which allows local staff to marry girls of less than 18 if they are over the age of consent in their country of citizenship.¹ However, Joey cannot engage in any sexual activity with the girl until they are married.

3) **Pieter the incentive worker:** Pieter's relationship with Josie constitutes sexual exploitation; exchange of goods for sex or sexual favors is explicitly prohibited. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of aid. In general, all Codes of Conduct strongly discourage sexual relationships between NGO staff and beneficiaries.

4) **Darlene the international recruit:** Darlene and Stanislaus are at least aiding sexual exploitation. Darlene is in breach of the Code of Conduct, as aid workers are "obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse." There is the issue of her financially profiting from the proceeds of prostitution at an establishment which 'encourages' Code breaches by others who are also accountable (NGOs; UN staff; peacekeepers; etc.). This violates both the spirit of the Code and also creates a climate that promotes or tolerates sexual exploitation and abuse.

At the conclusion of the training, offer as examples of materials they could use, the various visual materials developed.

¹ Agency policies regarding this issue vary across humanitarian organizations. So, it would be important that your own agency's policy on this matter inform this part of the discussion of this case study. If your agency does not have a specific policy related to this, it would be important to ask your human resources department to develop guidance on this matter.

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Handout 1: Understanding Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

Key Definitions

Sexual Exploitation

“...means 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.”

Sexual Abuse

“...the **actual or threatened** physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether **by force or under unequal or coercive** conditions.”

Sexual Harassment versus SEA

SEA occurs **against a beneficiary or vulnerable member of the community**. **Sexual harassment** occurs when power differentials between staff members are abused.

GBV and SEA

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence that is perpetrated against someone because of his/her gender. Thus, SEA can be seen as a type of GBV, as victims of SEA are often abused because of their vulnerable status as women, girls, boys or even men [in some circumstances].

Inter-Agency Standing Committee's [IASC] Six Core Principles

1. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constitute acts of **serious misconduct** and are therefore grounds for **disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal**.
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 in the age of a child is not a defence**.
3. **Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex**, including sexual favours or **other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour**, is prohibited. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
4. Sexual relationships between United Nations staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on **inherently unequal power dynamics** are **strongly discouraged**.
5. Where a [United Nations] staff member develops **concerns or suspicions** regarding sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by a fellow worker, whether **in the same agency or not** and whether or not within the United Nations system, he or she **must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms**.
6. [United Nations] staff are **obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**. Managers at all levels have a **particular responsibility** to support and develop systems that maintain this environment .

Staff member

Staff is defined as **any person who either works for or represents your organization**, regardless of whether or not s/he is compensated monetarily. So, it includes agency paid staff, volunteers, interns, board members, people recruited from the beneficiary population to do work for the agency [perhaps in return for additional rations or other benefits], etc. Some agencies define this beneficiary 'staff' group as incentive workers.

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Handout 2: Code of Conduct Exercise

In your groups, read the scenario you were assigned and then answer the following questions:

- Has the Code of Conduct been breached?
- If so, what rule has been broken?
- What would you do next?

You have 15 minutes to read the scenario and to discuss, as a group, your answers to the above questions. Be prepared to present briefly on what you discussed.

Scenarios

1) **Carlos is one of our logistics officers.** He has helped set up a boys' soccer club in town. Carlos enjoys the soccer games but he seems to particularly enjoy being with local teenagers. He gives presents (magazines, candy, sodas and pens) to many boys. You have heard rumors that he offers these gifts in exchange for sexual acts. However, when you ask around, you are told that the boys making the allegation are always fabricating stories like this. The senior manager who has reported the allegation to you finds it hard to believe as last summer he went on leave with Carlos to Geneva. While in Geneva he and Carlos visited a brothel together.

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