

Share the Peace case study

Share the Peace is a new NGO working with refugees and displaced populations in 32 countries. Share the Peace developed its code of conduct in 2004 and trained its entire staff on the code in 2005. The human resource and administration staff are responsible for ensuring that all staff are familiar with the code. After a meeting of field staff in which the code was discussed, Roseanne, the camp gender-based violence (GBV) coordinator, realized that some staff were breaking the code of conduct by taking photographs of the beneficiaries. She believed that many of the staff have been doing this with the best of intentions and will see any challenge to the practice as unnecessary, as “we have always done this.”

Roseanne decided to discuss it with the camp manager. On hearing Roseanne’s concerns, the camp manager responded that although taking photos is in “theory” breaking the code of conduct, he does not really see the harm in it. He suggested that unless Roseanne has hard evidence that the beneficiaries are being harmed or exploited in some way, there is not much he can do.

Roseanne wanted to get a better understanding of what was going on and to see if the beneficiaries were being exploited. She spoke to Doctor Matthew and Wambui the nurse, who have both been in the camp a long time. Doctor Matthew explained that the only photos taken are for calendars or brochures to promote events or raise funds. He told Roseanne that many people will be upset if she “rocks the boat” and that the beneficiaries themselves will not thank her for it. He asked her not to worry and promised to discuss it with the camp manager.

After Roseanne left Doctor Matthew, Wambui came to see her. Wambui requested that her statement remain confidential and explained she believes the camp manager and Doctor Matthew are heavily involved in taking photos of women and children and make a lot of money from them. She said she had been told directly by some of the women that they and their children were asked to pose naked for the photos. Wambui also said that the doctor has “special relationships” with some children. He claims that he is a father figure or mentor to these children and spends a lot of time alone with them. Wambui is suspicious that “inappropriate physical contact” takes place and pleads with Roseanne to take the complaint further, as this behavior is wrong. She gives Roseanne a photograph of a naked child, claiming that she took it from the doctor’s desk.

Roseanne went straight to the camp manager, told him what Wambui had told her and gave him the photo. The camp manager recognized the girl as Yemi and claimed that she is a known troublemaker and prostitute among the beneficiaries. He telephoned the regional manager in front of Roseanne. The regional manager instructed the camp manager to undertake an investigation under the IASC Protocol. Roseanne was reassured that the matter was being dealt with.

The camp manager has never done an investigation before, but had some training a year ago. He reviewed the document and decided that at this point the information is very vague and he doesn’t really believe Doctor Matthew would have done anything abusive or exploitative. The camp manager talked to Doctor Matthew, who explained that he provides physiotherapy for some children who have disorders which affect their mobility. He thought that this is probably the physical contact referred to. Doctor Matthew also informed the camp manager that he has treated Yemi for sexually transmitted diseases. Doctor Matthew explained that he has had difficulty with Wambui recently being late for work and having time off, and thinks she has probably taken advantage of the situation to get back at him.

The camp manager then went to see Yemi, the girl in the picture. Yemi's father informed the camp manager that he is going to discipline her for her promiscuous behavior.

The regional manager, the camp manager and Doctor Matthew then met to discuss the issues raised by Roseanne. The regional manager is satisfied that there has been no misconduct, but advised Doctor Matthew to try and make sure someone is always present when undertaking physiotherapy sessions. They agreed that Wambui should be moved to a camp maintenance job, as this is more flexible if she is late, and resolved the obvious break-down in relationship between her and Doctor Matthew.

The camp manager also met with the leaders of the beneficiary community and staff to explain that if anyone is unhappy with anything or has a complaint that they can go straight to him at any time. Yemi's father beat her, threw her out of the family shelter and the community ostracized her. Roseanne is trying to arrange Yemi's relocation.

Cast of Characters:

Name	Position	Employer
Roseanne	GBV coordinator	Share the Peace
(no name)	Camp manager	Share the Peace
Doctor Matthew	Doctor (and Wambui's supervisor)	Share the Peace
Wambui	Nurse	Share the Peace
Yemi	Young girl	Beneficiary
(no name)	Regional manager	Share the Peace
(no name)	Yemi's father	Beneficiary