بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Volunteers National Organization for Development and Humanities Services

منظمة المتطوعين الوطنية للتنمية والخدمات الانسانية

(VOLUNTEERS)

VOLUNTEER'S

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy

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1. Scope of the PSEA Policy

Humanitarian aid workers are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times to protect beneficiaries of assistance 1. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian aid workers directly contradicts the principles upon which humanitarian action is based and represents a protection failure on the part of the aid community. SEA inflicts harm on those whom the humanitarian community is obligated to protect, as well as jeopardizes the credibility of all assistance agencies.

All VOLUNTEER'S employees and related personnel are required to behave irreproachably with the project beneficiaries or members of the community, using particular care with the most vulnerable classes: minors, women, the elderly and social outcasts. 2 VOLUNTEER'S commits to create a zero-tolerance organizational culture against complacency and impunity. VOLUNTEER'S Management, among the others, is expected to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse. VOLUNTEER'S management staff must be familiar with and enforce this policy, being proactive in overseeing their team.

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Through the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, VOLUNTEER'S clearly expresses its determination to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and members of the community by VOLUNTEER'S employee and all related personnel.

VOLUNTEER'S SEA policy sets minimum standards to be followed to protect beneficiaries and members of the community from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The policy is principally addressed all VOLUNTEER'S employee and related personnel included in the following categories:

- Board of Directors and VOLUNTEER'S Management;
- All the employees and collaborators in all VOLUNTEER'S structures and projects in Italy and abroad;
- Non VOLUNTEER'S entities and their employees and individuals who have entered into partnership, sub-grant or sub-recipients agreement with VOLUNTEER'S, committees, associations of any sort – including their members and staff – supported, financially or otherwise, by VOLUNTEER'S in Italy and abroad;
- Consultants and other freelance persons who act on behalf of VOLUNTEER'S on the basis of service contracts (understood as consultants and providers of intellectual services);
- all persons acting voluntarily on behalf of VOLUNTEER'S;
- Suppliers of any sort of goods, services, or works, including current and potential suppliers.
- All the other people not included in the above mentioned categories who have signed a contract with VOLUNTEER'S.

The principles set forth in this policy apply all times, during and outside the office hours and during the periods of leave, with no exceptions.

2. Policy statement

SEA are a violation of VOLUNTEER'S Ethical Code and VOLUNTEER'S Code of Conduct. VOLUNTEER'S does not tolerate any form of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as bullying and a range of non-sexual abuse of power perpetrated by VOLUNTEER'S employee and related personnel against any individual regardless of age, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or ethnic origin. VOLUNTEER'S commits to do all the needful for preventing programmers having any negative effects such as SEA by VOLUNTEER'S employee and relate personnel against beneficiaries and members of the community. VOLUNTEER'S takes seriously all the complaints and concerns about sexual exploitation and abuse and it initiates rigours investigation of complaints that indicates a possible violation of this policy, VOLUNTEER'S Code of Conduct and VOLUNTEER'S Ethical Code.

3. Core Principles

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1- Sexual exploitation and abuse by VOLUNTEER'S employee and related personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary actions and/or termination of employment contract within the applicable and current regulations
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 and in no way shall ignorance of the age of the person be accepted as a justification. A specific Children Safeguarding Policy further set the principles and the operationalizing procedures and guidelines for guaranteeing children safeguarding in all domains of VOLUNTEER'S action;
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- Sexual relationships between VOLUNTEER'S staff and beneficiaries and members of the community are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of the Humanitarian aid work;
5- Where VOLUNTEER'S employee and related personnel develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or by a fellow worker, whether the individual works for VOLUNTEER'S or for other organization, partners, suppliers or other related stakeholders, he or she must report such concerns through the means and tools available within the Organization
6- The Supervisory Body must be informed about all the concerns and suspicions, including rumors in good faith arisen about sexual exploitation and abuse;
7- All VOLUNTEER'S staff members, whatever their levels are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of the Code of conduct and Ethical Code. When appropriate, VOLUNTEER'S ensures to report for criminal prosecution and legal action to the competent authority in accordance with the applicable law and evaluates to take out proceedings as a civil damaged party

4 – Commitments

❖ VOLUNTEER'S is dedicated to fulfilling the core principles through the implementation of the following commitments: To prevent and mitigate the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse by VOLUNTEER'S employee and related personnel:

- Managers and Human Resource team must ensure robust recruitment screening process for all the personnel, particularly for person who will have any direct or indirect contact with children;
- A Code of Conduct that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation all the employees and collaborators not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people is in place and duly known to the intended recipients;
- The Ethical Code is published on the internet site and is distributed and duly known to everyone who collaborates in any way with VOLUNTEER'S. The Ethical Code contains the mission, the vision, the declaration of values and principles, the set of rights, duties and

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responsibilities that it holds with whoever collaborates with VOLUNTEER'S or benefits from its projects or programs;

- VOLUNTEER'S is responsible to engage the support of communities and governments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse Local communities shall be involved in developing and approving the Compliant Handling Mechanism (CHM) so that the structure is both culturally and gender sensitive;
- A Compliant Handling Mechanism (CHM) for reporting sexual exploitation, abuse is in place and accessible. CHM should not be a separate, parallel system to other complaints and feedback structures in a given area, but rather link to and build on existing structures to create one system for handling feedback and complaint;
- VOLUNTEER'S employee and related personnel are completely aware of the Core Principles contained in this Policy, and the related principles included in VOLUNTEER'S Staff Code of Conduct, Ethical Code.

❖ To identify and act upon potential or actual sexual exploitation and abuse by staff in a timely and systematic manner. In order to do so:

- VOLUNTEER'S ensures to set protocols to process complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse in a timely manner, including the immediate suspension of the alleged perpetrator from all the activities with a direct impact on beneficiaries and communities until the investigation is ended;
- VOLUNTEER'S ensures to set protocols to proper inform the appropriate authority which is responsible for conducting investigations for sexual exploitation and abuse allegations in in respect of national and foreign legislation;
- VOLUNTEER'S ensures that beneficiaries and members of the community know to whom they should report and what sort of assistance they can expect to receive. All potential and actual survivors of SEA must be fully informed about how the complaint mechanism works, including the reporting process;
- Complainants and survivors have the right to receive feedback on the development and outcome of their case, and the CHM will make every effort to maintain lines of communication;
- VOLUNTEER'S ensures to take appropriate disciplinary actions including immediate termination of employment and referral for criminal prosecution and legal action, where appropriate, against the person who committed sexual exploitation and abuse, in accordance with the national law reporting 6 and responding system;
- VOLUNTEER'S ensure the protection of the victim, the complainant and the whistle-blower of SEA after having verified and confirmed the reported facts either by internal investigation or by external investigation. VOLUNTEER'S undertakes to provide assistance, psychosocial counselling, medical treatment, legal assistance to any victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, if identified as not specious, unfounded or false, perpetrated by one of its staff members or related personnel;

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- VOLUNTEER'S is responsible to ensure that all the thirdly party, included partners and suppliers are committed to respect the principles included in the SEA Policy, in addition to those explained in VOLUNTEER'S Ethical Code and Code of Conduct. The acceptance of the SEA Policy by signature of a declaration form is a condition for undertaking any relation with VOLUNTEER'S. For Partners, in case of missing of its own Protection to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, the following Policy must be incorporated into the contract and accepted by the Partner.

5 – Definitions

SEA Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Particular forms of gender-based violence that have been reported in humanitarian contexts, specifically alleged against humanitarian workers. 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 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 member of the community. Sexual harassment occurs between personnel/staff, and involves any unwelcome sexual advance or unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is not covered by SEA .

Survivor: A person who has SEA perpetrated against him/her or an attempt to perpetrate SEA against him/her

For the purposes of these SOPs, persons who report SEA committed against themselves are treated as survivors for the purposes of security and needs assessments

Supervisory Body: the Supervisory Body, as it is defined in the Control, Management, Organization Model, elected in accordance with the 231/2001 Legislative Decree .

Code of Conduct:

A set of standards of behavior that staff of an organization are obliged to adhere to.

Beneficiaries of Humanitarian Assistance: A person who receives assistance as part of either emergency relief or development aid through assistance programmers. Persons under this title include members of affected populations including refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable individuals, as well as host community members. Sexual exploitation or abuse of a beneficiary is SEA, however the individual need not be in a vulnerable position; a differential power or trust relationship is sufficient to establish SEA. Humanitarian Aid Worker: all persons involved in providing protection and/or assistance to affected populations and who have a contractual relationship with the participating organization/partners, including incentive workers9 from target communities. It refers to all staff of Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). Inter-agency cooperation in community-based complaint mechanisms. Global Standard Operating Procedures

humanitarian agencies and organizations, including UN agencies, IGOs, NGOs, implementing partners, including paid staff, volunteers, contractors, incentive workers, and anyone performing a task on behalf of any humanitarian agency or organization, regardless of the type or duration of their contract.

Relate personnel: all employees of VOLUNTEER'S, VOLUNTEER'S Members, affiliates and collaborator in Country Offices. The term also includes board members, volunteers, interns, and international and local consultants, in addition to individual and corporate contractors of these entities and related personnel. This includes non-VOLUNTEER'S entities and their employees and individuals who have entered into partnership, sub-grant or sub-recipient agreements with VOLUNTEER'S.

Complainant: a person who brings an allegation of SEA to the CBCM in accordance with established procedures. This person may be an SEA survivor or another person who is aware of the wrongdoing. Both the

Survivor and the complainant, if different from the survivor, should be protected from retaliation for reporting SEA. Where there is any conflict of interest between the survivor and another interested party, the survivor's wishes must be the principle consideration in case handling, particularly when there is a risk of additional physical and/or emotional harm.

Whistleblower: For the purposes of SEA Policy a whistleblower is a type of complainant, not the survivor, who is a humanitarian aid worker making a report of SEA. Organizational whistleblowing policies encourage staff to report concerns or suspicions of misconduct by colleagues by offering protection from retaliation for reporting, and clarify the rules and procedures for reporting and addressing such cases. Therefore, the definition, scope, and protection measures may differ between organizations. CHM principles (e.g. confidentiality) apply to whistleblowers as they would to any complainant, and internal agency policies shall protect whistleblowers on SEA from retaliation, so long as the report is made in good faith and in compliance with internal agency policies.