

Children in Crossfire Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The Children in Crossfire protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) Policy has been developed in accordance with the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the six core principles adopted in 2002 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2002), and the principles of the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (2003). As local laws and customs differ widely across the world, the Children in Crossfire PSEA Policy is informed by International Human Rights Law, United Nations' standards, and best practice guidelines from the humanitarian sector. It applies regardless of location and local law.

Children in Crossfire is committed to the PSEA by anyone associated with the organisation (e.g. board, staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants), and recognises both the particular vulnerability of women, girls and boys to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) as well as the inherent power dynamics evident within development contexts. Development workers and managers hold positions of power over the population they serve. This power must be used respectfully:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse of programme participants in the communities we serve constitutes acts of gross misconduct and is therefore grounds for termination of employment;
- Sexual activity with children or vulnerable adults and abuse by employees or volunteers 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 in the age of a child is not a defence;
- 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 exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries;
- Sexual relationships between employees or volunteers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

Employees and volunteers are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

Children in Crossfire believes that everybody has the right and are duty bound to report all suspicions and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Where an employee or volunteer develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he/she must report such concerns by following the procedures set out in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Please note the organisation has the right to inform appropriate public bodies of any such behaviour deemed inappropriate which would constitute a criminal offence.