

10) Raising awareness with volunteers, staff and communities

Why awareness raising is important

We know that raising awareness is effective at reducing the risks of SEA. It also helps reinforce our accountability to communities by sharing information and building trust in the Red Cross and Red Crescent. PSEA should be an integral part of community engagement and accountability (CEA). In order to prevent and respond to SEA in the right way, it is crucial that everyone in the organization and affected communities understand the root causes of SEA. This includes their rights and obligations in relation to PSEA, what they can expect from the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as how to safely report a concern.

PSEA is relevant to all personnel. Senior staff, security, drivers and first responders all have a part to play... no one should be left out.

The IFRC communication skills training materials

include slides and exercises, for a one-day basic training on improving communication skills. This training pack is aimed at front-line volunteers and comprises training on the seven Fundamental Principles and Code of Conduct; communication skills; managing complaints; and conflict resolution.

Actions

Staff and volunteers should be briefed on their PSEA obligations when joining the National Society. But it is not enough for them to just sign the staff Code of Conduct. It is important that they fully understand its contents, particularly our zero tolerance of SEA and the implications should staff breach the Code of Conduct. Adequate training on the Fundamental Principles and mandate of the Red Cross and Red Crescent must also be carried out so they can explain it clearly to communities and realize their roles and responsibilities in reporting and responding to SEA.

At the **community level**, orientation meetings should be held to discuss assessment and project plans with communities, explaining who we are; our Fundamental Principles; rights (including right to be treated with respect, and right to receive humanitarian assistance free of charge and without being exploited or harmed); overview of program activities; contact details and how to report a concern. Information should be visual, child-friendly and accessible for vulnerable groups towards SEA.

Regular awareness raising is important to reinforce key messages. But be mindful of staff turnover. You will need to re-introduce PSEA for each specific context, including whenever there is large mobilization or recruitment of volunteers to respond to a disaster or an emergency. We recommend arranging refresher training and/or producing material to raise awareness. This can include posters or leaflets displayed in the office, distributed to staff and volunteers and displayed within communities.

Communications should be well coordinated and consulted with community leaders, elders and local actors, for example local authorities and civil society actors with expertise in protection, gender and PSEA issues. This might include collaboration on referrals and assistance to survivors; the rights of persons with disabilities; child protection; inclusion of sexual minorities, older people and other marginalized groups such as refugees, migrants, homeless people and any other relevant group.