Integrating PSEA into projects and services: A guide for operations and field teams

Operations and field teams often have to consider many themes, issues and competing priorities. PSEA may be considered a basic minimum standard to help ensure that programs and services 'do no harm'. It is also part of the **Core Humanitarian Standard for quality and accountability** and a requirement of many donors, including governments and UN.

9) Carrying out a SEA risk assessment

Why PSEA risk assessment is important

It is important to carry out SEA risk assessments for all projects and services which are community-facing. This will help identify and minimize the risks of SEA caused by our people, operations, projects and services.

The assessment should be carried out with guidance from staff with expertise in PSEA, gender and/or protection.

Actions

Plan the SEA assessment: Decide on whether it will be a standalone assessment or integrated into a broader capacity and/or needs assessment. Establish the assessment team, which should include project/service delivery staff who have a good rapport with groups vulnerable to SEA, with technical support/guidance from an appropriate adviser.

Situation analysis: Identify national laws relating to SEA and whether there are risks in reporting SEA allegations to the authorities; existing trends in sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking and abuse, including child abuse, in the project communities; community attitudes, customs and practices which may contribute to SEA, including harmful gender norms such as early marriage and female genital mutilation; power imbalances and discriminatory practices which restrict access to resources for minority groups; informal justice and protection systems.

Vulnerable groups towards SEA
SEA often results from power imbalances associated with gender, age, disability or minority groups. Emergency affected community members often have multiple intersecting layers of vulnerability towards SEA. People most at risk are often women, children, people with disabilities and sexual minorities. Men can be targeted too.

Organizational and staffing assessment: Have project/service delivery staff and volunteers signed and been briefed on PSEA policy and staff Code of Conduct? Are safe practices established, related to recruitment screening, induction and complaints mechanism for SEA concerns? Is there a balance of gender representation in the project/service delivery team?

Project assessment: Are there risks of SEA in project delivery? For example, is the project targeting people with complex vulnerabilities? Is there frequent contact with children and/or vulnerable adults? Does the work involve intimate care such as in a hospital or care setting? Do community members have to travel to access assistance through the project? Are high value items being distributed and/or will assistance be delivered inconsistently?

Community consultation: Gather perspectives on the risks of SEA in relation to planned project activities. Involve people of all gender identities, ages and abilities, with a focus on particularly vulnerable groups towards SEA.

Mitigating actions: Identify practical actions that can be integrated to the project/ service to address SEA risks.

SEA risk assessment format

Project Title	
Organization(s)	
Procedure for Investigation and Response	

Vulnerable Group	SEA risks	Action	Who is involved?	When and how will this be monitored?

Examples of practical actions to address SEA risks

- gender-balanced teams/increased number of female staff
- supervision/accompaniment of staff and volunteers, for example staff and volunteers should work in pairs, whenever possible, and NEVER be alone with a child. In the case that staff and volunteers must work alone, a system should be established for monitoring movements and security
- designate PSEA focal points and ensure they are well known to volunteers, staff and community members
- map referrals and share referrals pathways with staff and volunteers
- establish a complaints mechanism for SEA concerns, in consultation with groups vulnerable to SEA
- train groups vulnerable towards SEA on how to claim their right to be safe and protected from abuse
- identify safe spaces for project activities
- train staff and volunteers in developing rapport and trust with community members
- collaborate with local women's groups, disabled people's organizations and child protection actors to help shape PSEA programming