



# **PSEA officer role - findings**

**June 2021**

# Introduction

**Purpose of the review:** To carry out a learning review of PSEA work in the Southern Africa region in collaboration with NRCS, IFRC and BRC. The review will explore what has gone well so far, identify challenges and opportunities to take forward to the next stage of PSEA work in the region

**Outputs:** findings and ‘food for thought’

## **Who we interviewed:**

We facilitated two focus group discussions with staff from IFRC, BRC and NRCS:

- Helena Ekandjo, NRCS
- Thamsanqa Makhulumo, NRCS
- Erven Haimbodi, NRCS
- Dr Petronella Mugoni, IFRC
- Daniel Peter, IFRC
- Ana De Castro Palomo, BRC
- Bheki Mathabela, BRC PSEA Officer
- Louise Boughen, BRC PSEA Advisor



# What we heard

## Design and timeline

- There is very little PSEA expertise within the Southern Africa region, or globally within the IFRC so the group were very reliant on a single BRC resource
- Due to limited funding for the position the terms of reference for the role was very ambitious within the restricted timeline, though this was recognised and the role was extended 3 months with funding provided by the IFRC
- The National Societies selected for the pilot had no previous experience in PSEA or PGI and didn't have any dedicated resource in this area
- The lack of PSEA policies was picked up during BRC Due Diligence of the National Societies and discussed with the National Society
- PSEA was not an organisational priority for the National Societies and was not included in their strategy or organisational development plan
- The National Societies have limited capacity and resource available to support activities identified within the PSEA assessment
- Given the context of the National Societies selected for the pilot, the timeline and outputs were ambitious

# What we heard

## National Society capacity

- The 'way in' to introduce PSEA and instigate such institutional change is very dependent on buy-in from Secretary Generals and senior leadership - what happens when these senior leaders leave?
- Making progress against the plan of action is also reliant on a small number of staff within the National Societies, who have limited capacity to support new initiatives alongside their existing roles
- There are strong National Societies within the region who are already successfully institutionalising PGI and PSEA
- One of the most valuable initiatives from the pilot has been linking National Societies up with networks in the region to facilitate peer learning

# What we heard

## Culture and context

- National Societies are not working a vacuum and the successful implementation of PSEA policies is reliant on buy-in and support from other organisations such as government departments, social services and police
- It appears that, due to lack of capacity within the National Societies, implementation of the plan of action is being led by BRC/IFRC (e.g. writing policies). How do we ensure that what we are developing is relevant and realistic, culturally appropriate and will work in this context? For example, within a small country and National Society, how can whistle blowers be protected?
- Important to ensure that cultural norms are taken into account when introducing new concepts, so we don't enforce an unnatural working environment for staff and volunteers

# What we heard

## Sustainability

- The current approach is very reliant on individuals (within BRC, IFRC and the National Society) and is time consuming for those individuals. For example, having just one PSEA expert in the group to support implementation of technical outputs. Is this sustainable? And is it the most effective way to influence institutional change within National Societies within the region?
- Additionally, the National Societies are still very early in their PSEA journeys – it is an entirely new concept to them – and will require significant support over the next year to implement the policies and develop training for staff, volunteers and stakeholders
- Possibility to ‘piggy back’ on other programmes funded by partners within a National Society to start embedding PSEA programmatically rather than just focussing on institutional change which could take time to filter down to service delivery

# What we heard

## Enablers

- IFRC presence and relationships with Secretary Generals and senior management across the region
- PSEA capacity and expertise within BRC

## Blockers

- Covid restrictions limiting face to face engagement – particularly crucial for training and implementation of policies
- Lack of funding for the role so working with a limited timeline
- Lack of PSEA expertise in IFRC (regionally and globally) meaning the work is reliant on one person

# Food for thought

- Revisit terms of reference for the final few months of the post to develop a realistic timeline and linked outputs, as well as development and communication of a clear exit strategy
- Would a regional post covering more countries and facilitating peer learning be a more effective, efficient and value for money approach?
- Would having a pool of regional trainers be a faster way of rolling out PSEA concepts within National Societies – currently reliant on a few individuals with remits wider than just PSEA
- Should the National Societies have an approach that looks beyond themselves to support structures nationally – especially around survivor protection?
- Should the PSEA approach be co-developed and led by the National Societies so that it is more culturally aligned and realistic for the context?