

**POLICY NAME:** Prevention of Sexual  
Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment, PSEAH  
**APPROVED BY:** Co-Directors  
**POLICY OWNER:** Operations

**CATEGORY:** Safeguarding & Accountability  
**REVISIONS APPROVED:** April 2026  
**NEXT REVIEW:** March 2029

### 1. Introduction

World Renew’s tagline is based on Micah 6:8 and captures the overriding values and motivations for our work: “Doing justice, loving mercy and serving Christ” in all we do. Our value of “People Flourishing” means that “We treat each person equally as an image-bearer of God.” In World Renew, we know that our world, and we ourselves, are fallen and broken; and that God works to redeem and renew us and our world. This reality shapes our approach to our work and the policies that we choose to govern our decisions. Ephesians 5:8-11 summarizes this perspective:

*“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them.”<sup>1</sup>*

This passage demonstrates that sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) must never be covered up; it must first be prevented by goodness and righteousness; when it is suspected we must seek truth; and when it occurs it must be exposed and addressed.

World Renew is therefore strongly committed to promoting the security, dignity, and wellbeing of participants, volunteers, staff, and partners and in particular we are committed to preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) and to working with a survivor-centered approach that upholds safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination. We affirm a zero-tolerance stance on SEAH: any form of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment is unacceptable and constitutes gross misconduct. The Co-Directors, alongside senior leadership, carry ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within World Renew.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 5: 8-11, The Bible, New International Version (NIV)

Leadership and organizational culture are key components of ensuring effective PSEAH and the establishment of a speak up culture where staff are empowered to report SEAH incidents without fear of retaliation. This includes ensuring adequate resources, accountability systems, and oversight to uphold the highest standards of prevention, response, and organizational integrity. As part of the global development and humanitarian sector, World Renew recognizes our duty of care to all the people we work with. We are committed to creating safe and respectful workplaces and programmes that promote gender equality and are free from gender-based violence, including by addressing and responding to all abuse of power, holding people to account, and protecting the vulnerable.

This policy reflects not only World Renew's Christian values but also our commitment to international obligations and standards including the *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles on PSEAH*, the *Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)*, and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to any work implemented or funded by World Renew anywhere in the world, and it applies to all World Renew staff, volunteers, board members, interns, consultants, contractors, suppliers, visitors and partners. It is well understood that incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment occur in situations of power imbalances and acute vulnerability. In humanitarian crises, people are particularly vulnerable. In those contexts, social and political structures designed to protect members of the community are often eroded and weakened. Also, humanitarian aid workers hold considerable resources and power during times of crisis, creating an environment ripe for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment to occur. While some of the dynamics may be different in development contexts, there is the potential for SEAH anywhere there are power imbalances and therefore this policy covers all programmes funded and implemented by World Renew and its partners as well as to both World Renew staff and World Renew's partners' staff.

## **3. Purpose**

This policy is intended to protect everyone from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, including anyone benefiting from and/or involved in World Renew and its partners' programmes as well as staff and volunteers working for World Renew and its partners.

#### **4. Internal Guiding Principles**

The guiding principles of this policy outline World Renew's core commitments in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH). They serve as the foundation for all safeguarding actions, ensuring that our work upholds the dignity, safety, and rights of every person. Rooted in our Christian values and aligned with global humanitarian standards, these principles provide clear expectations for staff, volunteers, and partners in creating safe, respectful, and accountable environments.

##### **4.1. Zero Tolerance Approach**

World Renew has zero tolerance for any incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment by anyone involved in its work, including but not limited to, World Renew staff, volunteers, board members, consultants, exposure visit participants, contractors, field workers and partners.

##### **4.2. Survivor-Centered Approach**

World Renew applies a survivor-centered approach to all cases of sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment (PSEAH). The rights, dignity, and wellbeing of survivors are paramount, with all actions guided by safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination. Informed consent directs reporting, referral, and case management, ensuring survivors remain in control and can access appropriate medical, psychosocial, legal, and protection support.

##### **4.3. Do No Harm**

The Do No Harm principle ensures that PSEAH measures and all programmes avoid causing further harm, particularly to vulnerable groups. It requires addressing power imbalances, managing risks, and ensuring that reporting and referral processes protect survivors while upholding dignity, safety, and community trust.

##### **4.4. Accountability**

The Accountability principle ensures staff, partners, and leaders are answerable for preventing and responding to PSEAH with transparency, responsibility, and community participation. It requires clear reporting systems, timely action, and openness so that those affected can trust programmes to be safe and dignified.

#### **4.5 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Six Core Principles**

In 2002, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance) established a Taskforce on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crisis. One of the key outputs of this Taskforce was the creation of Six Core Principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. These are the principles that this Policy is based on:

- i) Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- ii) Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or local age of consent. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.
- iii) 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 the exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- iv) Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers 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.
- v) Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns of suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
- vi) Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

### **5. Policy<sup>2</sup>**

#### **5.1 Related Policies, Procedures and Codes of Conduct**

This policy complements, but does not replace, the World Renew Codes of Conduct, the Child Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblower, Code of Conduct Policy, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and the World Renew Complaints Policy. World Renew commits to keeping these policies up to date and ensuring World Renew staff and staff of World Renew Partners are aware of the contents of these policies and are supported in their implementation. Where

---

<sup>2</sup> Core elements of this Policy have been based on the Canadian Foodgrains Bank “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” Policy (2018)

relevant, accompanying procedures and guidance notes are provided to give additional clarity on the implementation of these policies.

All World Renew staff, board members, interns, consultants, contractors, suppliers, visitors, volunteers, and those of their partners, are required to sign the World Renew Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. All World Renew Human Resources processes include a component of safe recruitment, including background checks and disclosure on any previous SEAH investigations.

### **5.2 Obligation to report**

World Renew and its partners will ensure that all staff and volunteers accept and understand their responsibilities and obligations with respect to reporting all forms of inappropriate behavior, even if they are not the target of the behavior.

All concerns, suspicions, or incidents of misconduct must be reported promptly through the established reporting channels. Any misconduct relating to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) must be reported within 24 hours of becoming aware of the concern.

Failure to report known or suspected misconduct within the required timeframe may constitute a breach of organizational policy and may result in disciplinary action.

### **5.3 Partnership Standards**

All partnerships are subject to World Renew's safeguarding requirements, and partners are expected to uphold the same standards of protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH). This includes having their own safeguarding policies or formally adopting World Renew's, ensuring all staff sign relevant Codes of Conduct, and establishing a rights-based, safe, confidential, and accessible complaints mechanisms with clear referral pathways for survivors. World Renew will support partners through orientation, training, and capacity building, while also monitoring compliance through regular reporting, reviews, and audits. Partners are required to report SEAH incidents to World Renew within agreed timeframes, and non-compliance may result in corrective actions, suspension of funding, or termination of the partnership. These commitments reflect a shared responsibility to promote transparency, accountability, and the creation of safe and dignified programmes for all.

### **5.4 Roles and Responsibilities**

The responsibility for safeguarding and PSEAH is shared across all levels of the organization. The Co-Directors and leadership provide overall oversight and ensure accountability by

allocating resources and setting a strong safeguarding culture. Senior management is responsible for implementing this policy, monitoring compliance, and ensuring timely response to incidents. Safeguarding and PSEAH focal points coordinate prevention, awareness, reporting, and referral mechanisms, offering guidance and support at all levels. Human Resources also plays a critical role by embedding safe recruitment practices, delivering regular training, and enforcing sanctions where breaches occur. Together, these roles ensure that safeguarding is fully integrated into the organization's systems and daily practice.

### **5.5 Complaints Mechanism and investigations procedures**

In line with World Renew's Complaints Policy, and in alignment with the CHS commitments and international PSEAH standards on reporting requirements, World Renew and its partners will ensure confidential complaints mechanisms, appropriate referral pathways, and accompanying investigation procedures and processes are in place to protect and support survivors. Any investigation process undertaken must ensure that:

- i) The investigators be competent and impartial
- ii) The investigators determines the circumstances and facts behind the allegation and draws conclusions on whether there is evidence that proves or disproves an allegation
- iii) Where a complaint is substantiated, follow-up actions will be identified and taken, including, where safe and appropriate, making referrals to relevant authorities and specialized services (health, psychosocial, social welfare, and legal) as required.
- iv) World Renew Senior Management will be informed of where improvements or changes are needed in WR policy, processes and programming. Appropriate resources will be allocated to implement these changes.

### **5.6 Protection of informant safety**

World Renew and its partners will seek to always protect informant safety within the mechanisms used for reporting sexual misconduct. This includes:

- i) Providing clear, transparent, and accessible reporting systems in line with World Renew's Complaints Policy, Whistleblower Policy, and Data Protection Policy;
- ii) Maintaining, wherever legally possible, confidentiality for informants and whistleblowers, and ensuring that any personal information is handled, stored, and shared securely in accordance with World Renew's Data Protection Policy;

- iii) Ensuring freedom from reprisal or punishment for individuals and communities involved in reporting, consistent with the protections outlined in the Whistleblower Policy, while safeguarding their personal data throughout the process.

### **5.7 Expectations and support for World Renew partners**

World Renew will provide its partners with its expectations regarding preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in its partner and/or project agreements.

World Renew will support its partners to take all appropriate measures to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse both of and by their staff, including working with their partners to build their capacity to fulfill the commitments laid out in this, and related, policies.

## **6. Implementation, Monitoring and Review.**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and revised to incorporate any lessons learned during implementation or significant changes in context. The implementation of this PSEAH Policy will be supported through ongoing capacity building, integration into partner agreements, and dissemination to all staff, volunteers, and partners. Monitoring of compliance will occur through routine safeguarding audits, partner monitoring visits, incident reporting reviews, and annual reflections on PSEAH performance, and reflected in the Global Safeguarding Framework. Findings from investigations, complaints, trends, monitoring reports, and partner feedback will be used to strengthen preventive measures, improve reporting mechanisms, and ensure accountability. The policy will also be updated to reflect changes in World Renew standards, sector-wide PSEAH developments, and national legal requirements, ensuring that its application remains effective, survivor-centered, and contextually relevant

## **7. Key terms and definitions<sup>3</sup>**

*Abuse:* Where the term “abuse” is used in this policy it should be understood to include sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

---

<sup>3</sup> World Renew commits to complying with its applicable statutory and legislative obligations. Accordingly, the specific definitions, terms or concepts used in this policy are for reference purposes only. If necessary, the applicable state, provincial or federal definitions mandated by the appropriate jurisdiction where an employee is employed, will take precedence and/or will supersede the definitions outlined in this policy.

*Abuse of power:* Abuse of power includes any abusive behavior by a person in a position of authority and trust against someone in a position of vulnerability and/or dependency.

*Child or Minor:* A person under the age of 18 (a child according to the definition in the Convention for the Rights of the Child).

*Complaint:* A complaint is a specific grievance of anyone who has been negatively affected by the work of World Renew or their partner, or who considers that World Renew has not fulfilled a stated commitment or is in breach of a World Renew Policy. This includes staff behaviour in relation to the World Renew Codes of Conduct. World Renew will handle complaints in a fair, appropriate and prompt manner. A complaint necessitates a response.

*Investigation:* a systematic process through which information is gathered that attempts to prove or disprove an allegation(s).

*Partner:* an organization that World Renew enters into Partnership agreements with to collaborate on a mutually agreed action.

*Sexual abuse:* is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. (United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, 9 October 2003; Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse).

*Sexual exploitation:* is defined as 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 (United Nations Secretary General Bulletin, 9 October 2003). In these situations, the potential victim believes she/he has no other choice than to comply; this is not consent and it is exploitation. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Humanitarian/development worker demanding (or accepting) sex in exchange for material assistance, favors, or privileges
- Teacher insisting on (or accepting) sex in exchange for passing grade or admission to class
- Refugee leader demanding (or accepting) sex in exchange for favors or privileges
- Security worker insisting on (or accepting) sex in exchange for safe passage
- Driver demanding (or accepting) sex to give a female person a seat in the vehicle

*Sexual harassment:* Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, comment, expressed or implied sexual demand, touch, joke, gesture, or any other communication or

conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, written or visual, by any person to another individual within the scope of work. Sexual harassment may be directed at members of the same or opposite sex and includes harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Sexual harassment can occur between any one or more individuals, employee or beneficiary, regardless of their work relationship.

*Survivor or victim:* The person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused. The term survivor implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive (BSO/HAP).

*Survivor-centred approach:* A survivor-centred approach creates a supportive environment in which the survivor's rights and wishes are respected, their safety is ensured, and they are treated with dignity and respect. A survivor-centered approach is based on the following guiding principles:

- **Safety:** The safety and security of the survivor and her/his children is the primary consideration.
- **Confidentiality:** Survivors have the right to choose to whom they will or will not tell their story, if and when appropriate.
- **Respect:** All actions taken should be guided by respect for the choices, wishes, rights and dignity of the survivor. The role of helpers is to facilitate recovery and provide resources to aid the survivor.
- **Non - discrimination:** Survivors should receive equal and fair treatment regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other legally protected characteristic.<sup>4</sup>

*Vulnerable Adults:* any person aged 18 or over who, additionally, either:

- a) has particular care, support or special needs and as a result abuse can occur when they are mistreated, neglected or harmed by another person who holds a position of trust or
- b) the adult is dependent/reliant on others for the provision of basic services because of their context (eg in a refugee camp or as a recipient of relief supplies or in an unfamiliar country/location) and are potentially vulnerable to exploitation or abuse because of their status or lack of power/control or
- c) The adult is in a relationship (social or work), or in contact with, another adult who seeks to misuse their position of authority or trust to control, coerce, manipulate or dominate them.

*World Renew Staff:* Refers to all World Renew staff, volunteers, consultants, exposure visit participants, contractors and field workers.

---

<sup>4</sup> Definition taken from UNFPA Managing Gender-Based Violence Programmes in Emergencies, E-Learning Companion Guide