

**POLICY NAME:** Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

**APPROVED BY:** CPAC

**POLICY OWNER:** Co-Directors, HR

**CATEGORY:** Human Resources

**APPROVED:** April 15, 2019

**NEXT REVIEW:** April 2022

## 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 summarises 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 and abuse must never be covered up; it must first of all 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 beneficiaries, volunteers and staff, and in particular we are committed to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and working with a survivor-centred approach. As part of the global development and humanitarian sector, World Renew recognises 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.

## 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 and World Renew partners and their staff.

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

It is well understood that incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse 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 and abuse to occur. While some of the dynamics may be different in development contexts, there is the potential for sexual exploitation and abuse 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 and abuse, including anyone benefitting 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. 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 favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes 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 or 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 particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

## 5. POLICY<sup>2</sup>

### 5.1 Zero Tolerance Approach

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

### 5.2 Related Policies, Procedures and Codes of Conduct

This policy complements, but does not replace, the World Renew Codes of Conduct, the Child Safeguarding Policy, 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 relevant, accompanying procedures and guidance notes are provided to give additional clarity on the implementation of these policies.

All World Renew staff and volunteers, and those of their partners, are required to sign the World Renew Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

### 5.3 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 behaviour, even if they are not the target of the behaviour.

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

### **5.4 Complaints Mechanism and investigations procedures**

In line with World Renew's Complaints Policy, World Renew and its partners will ensure confidential complaints mechanisms and accompanying investigation procedures and processes are in place to protect and support survivors. Any investigation process undertaken must ensure that:

- i. The investigator be competent and impartial
- ii. The investigator 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 be identified and taken.

### **5.5 Protection of informant safety**

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

- vii. Providing clear, transparent and accessible reporting systems in line with World Renew's complaints policy;
- viii. Maintaining, wherever legally possible, confidentiality for informants and whistleblowers
- ix. Ensuring freedom from reprisal or punishment for individuals and communities involved in reporting.

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

World Renew will provide its partners with its expectations regarding preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse 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. 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.

### 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.

*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 organisation 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

<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.

- 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

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

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- c. 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 as a result of their status or lack of power/control or
- d. 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 fieldworkers.