



Australia Awards

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Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

This resource aims to raise awareness and understanding on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

Keeping everyone safe

All people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence and any abuse regardless of age, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, religion, ethnic origin or any other reason. PSEAH (Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment) is a term used to refer to measures taken to protect people from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by their own staff and associated personnel. We also now use it to mean protecting staff and associated personnel from sexual harassment or misconduct within the workplace. As a development program, Australia Awards recognises that unequal power dynamics exist within and between organisations, communities and individuals. Power imbalances introduce the risk of some people exploiting their position of power for personal gain. This can translate into sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. It is never acceptable for any person in a position of power to abuse their authority under any circumstances and especially against the most vulnerable. Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse undermine the credibility of the work that Australia Awards does and breaches the principle of do no harm.

Australia Awards has a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and is committed to addressing SEAH throughout its work.

Background

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) (ST/SGB/2003/13) entered into force in the UN in 2003. The need for reinforced action to protect beneficiaries of humanitarian and development programs from SEA arose from reports confirming that humanitarian workers had been responsible for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.

What is sexual exploitation?

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. This definition includes trafficking in persons and online acts, or threatened acts, of: intimidation, sharing illicit images or graphic depictions, and threats to physical safety and wellbeing.

What is sexual abuse?

The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. This includes forced marriage, sexual slavery and attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual kissing and touching).

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual Harassment includes but is not limited to, unwanted sexual advances, sexual jokes, subtle or overt pressure, or unwelcome requests for sexual favours, sexual innuendoes and offensive propositions or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, behaviour or gesture of a sexual nature, regardless of a person's sex, gender or sexual orientation. A person sexually harasses another person with the before mentioned actions in circumstances in which a reasonable person, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Australia's commitment to preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australia Awards program take a proactive approach to combatting SEAH through building longstanding systems and procedures in social safeguarding. DFAT adopts a survivor-centred response that prioritises support based on the wishes and characteristics of survivors, and works with its partners to do the same.





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PSEAH policies and practices aim to end SEAH by people in positions of power and ensure that allegations of SEAH are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

DFAT has four key priorities to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

1. Ensure support for survivors, victims and whistle-blowers; enhance accountability and transparency; strengthen reporting; and tackle impunity.
2. Incentivise cultural change through strong leadership, organisational accountability and better human resource processes.
3. Adopt minimum standards and ensure we and our partners meet them.
4. Strengthen organisational capacity and capability across the international aid sector, including building the capability of implementing partners to meet the minimum standards.

Resources and further information

The United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is committed to protecting affected populations from sexual exploitation and abuse. [ISAC has a number](#)

[of core principles](#). These have been translated into plain English in partnership with Translators Without Borders.

Prevention of SEAH guiding principles:

- No sex with beneficiaries or beneficiary community members.
- Do not pay for sex with money, employment, goods or services.
- Report any acts or suspected acts of SEAH.
- Create and maintain a work environment that prevents SEAH.
- Treat all people respectfully without discrimination, bullying or coercion.

[CHS Alliance PSEA Handbook \(2017\)](#) provides a reference guide to implementing measures for PSEAH.

Australia endorsed the [Joint Statement and 22 Commitments](#) at the UK-led International Summit to Tackle Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in the Aid Sector in October 2018.

UNICEF provides a free [training video](#) for all staff and partners on PSEA.

