

Social Organization District Coordination Committee Parsa
Head Office: Birgunj Metropolitan city-14



Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Policy 2077

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1. SCOPE & PURPOSE:

This policy applies to all SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel during and outside normal working hours; including their Partner organizations and implementing programs actors. Except in countries where the following policy contravenes local legislation, in these cases, local legislation must be followed with guidance from the Affiliate equivalent to Safeguarding Team. SODCC Parsa policy will apply in the event that it is more stringent than local legislation. This policy sets out the SODCC Parsa approach to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse in the work place and outside in normal context. This includes:

- Our commitments to prevent SHEA and to ensure effective actions are taken when problems occur;
- Principles upon which we will base our decision making and actions;
- Our expectations of all those who work on behalf of SODCC Parsa guideline.

2. POLICY STATEMENT:

SODCC Parsa has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse. At SODCC Parsa, we believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence and any abuse of power regardless of age, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, religion or ethnic origin. We recognize that there are unequal power dynamics across the organization and in relation to those we serve, and that we face risk of some people exploiting their position of power for personal gain or benefits. SODCC Parsa will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representative associated with the delivery of its work carrying out any form of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. SODCC Parsa commits to supporting survivors, improving safeguarding capacity, reporting, investigating, responding and preventing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. Affiliate Safeguarding (SG) Leads and Teams will use this Policy in conjunction with relevant employment/labour laws, duty of care and relevant criminal laws to make decisions about how to respond to any complaints and concerns raised. For further advice, please contact your affiliate's Lead safeguarding officer or program focal person and complain the issues. However, it covers sexual harassment as well as sexual exploitation and abuse (SHEA). This policy does not form part of an employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of management. Other related policies include One SODCC Parsa Code of Conducts, Child Protection Policy and SODCC Parsa Safeguarding Policy.

3. SODCC Parsa PSEA PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS:

SODCC Parsa is committed to achieving full, ongoing implementation of the Six Core Principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

3.1 SODCC Parsa Core Principles on PSEA:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are, therefore, grounds for termination of employment or



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contract/agreement. Sexual harassment by SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of the majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defense beyond Convention on the Rights of Child.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior by SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel is prohibited at all times. This includes buying sex or the exchange of assistance that is due to program participants.
- Sexual relationships between SODCC Parsa Employees or Related Personnel and beneficiaries are forbidden. Given the contexts where SODCC Parsa operates, such relationships may be based on inherently unequal power dynamics and may undermine the credibility and integrity of SODCC Parsa relief and development work. SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel must declare previously existing relationships with beneficiaries to their line managers or program focal person.
- Where an SODCC Parsa Employee or Related Personnel develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation or sexual harassment by a fellow worker, whether in SODCC Parsa or not, he or she must immediately report such concerns via the established reporting mechanisms.
- SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse and promotes the implementation of this Policy. SODCC Parsa Executive directors and program officers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems, which maintain this environment.

3.2 SODCC Parsa Commitments

Oxfam is dedicated to fulfilling the following commitments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment as highlighted in the six Core Principles above.

a. Safe Organizational Culture:

SODCC Parsa will make every effort to create and maintain a safe organizational culture for all those who work for and with SODCC Parsa, as well as those in the communities where SODCC Parsa operates through robust prevention and response work, offering support to survivors, and holding those responsible for sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse to account.

b. Reporting SHEA:

Ensure that we have multiple channels for SODCC Parsa Employees, Related Personnel, beneficiaries, and others to safely report sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. These channels should be designed in consultation with local communities and staffs to ensure that they are safe and accessible.

- Ensure that everyone who works on behalf of SODCC Parsa and those we serve have information about how to access these safe reporting channels. This should include posting reporting procedures in local languages and regularly explaining these channels.



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- Provide training and information to all SODCC Parsa employees and Related Personnel, particularly focal persons for receiving complaints, to ensure they understand their obligations and how to discharge their duties should they receive a complaint. A particular emphasis should be made on confidentiality.

c. Responding to SHEA Reports:

SODCC Parsa will respond in a professional and timely manner to all concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse. All concerns or allegations will always be taken seriously, and investigated and acted upon where appropriate, in line with our safeguarding principles listed below.

- **Robust and accountable case management:** All allegations of SHEA, and subsequent follow-up, will be documented in a secure and confidential database to ensure accountability. The report will be officially acknowledged within 24 hours, and a safeguarding team will convene a case conference to assess immediate risks and next steps within 7 days.

- **Investigations:** SODCC Parsa will carry out independent, safe, and discreet investigations, through trained investigators working with SODCC Parsa Safeguarding Teams, recognizing the rights of and duty of care to everyone involved, including the complainant and/or survivor, witnesses and the subject of complaint (SoC).

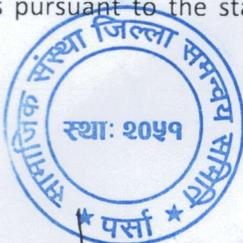
- **Accountable decision-making:** SODCC Parsa will take swift and appropriate action against SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel who are found to have committed SHEA. This may include administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant local authorities if appropriate and safe to do so. An independent and gender representative decision making panel will be assigned in every investigation to ensure impartiality, transparency, and accountability. The decision making process will be subject to scrutiny by relevant SG leads and/or advisors.

- **Survivor Support:** Survivors of SHEA are entitled to specialized support services. SODCC Parsa commits to refer survivors to competent support services as appropriate and available and according to the wants and the needs of the survivor. Support may include specialist psychosocial support such as counseling, medical assistance, legal counseling and access to SODCC Parsa Employee Assistance Programs (where available). Assistance will be made available regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). For further details, please refer to SODCC Parsa safeguarding Policy of other government institutions for legal institutional care.

d. Embedding PSEA into Oxfam work –

- **Safer Recruitment:** In compliance with applicable laws, SODCC Parsa is committed to prevent perpetrators of SHEA from being (re)hired or (re)deployed. Executive director, Lead Safeguarding Officer and Human Resource teams will ensure robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel, including employees, volunteers, consultants and other representatives. As part of this, all application forms, interviews and references must address Safeguarding and equality requirements and attitudes.

- **Partnership Agreements:** SODCC Parsa will ensure that, when engaging in partnerships, sub-grant or sub-recipient agreements, these agreements: (i) incorporate this Policy as an attachment; (ii) include the appropriate language requiring such contracting entities and individuals, and their employees and volunteers to abide by a Code of Conduct that is pursuant to the standards of this Policy; and (iii) expressly state that the failure of



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those entities or individuals, as appropriate, to take preventive measures against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, to investigate and report allegations there or to take corrective actions when SHEA has occurred, shall constitute grounds for SODCC Parsa to terminate such agreements as much as possible.

- **Staff and partner training :** SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel must receive as part of their induction trainings on PSEA, Safeguarding and others rule and regulations when they join SODCC Parsa including a briefing on SODCC Parsa policies and values, the Code of Conduct, information about how to report concerns, and advice about where to seek further information about safeguarding and safer practices across the organization. Anyone working directly with beneficiaries on behalf of SODCC Parsa must receive additional training on how to receive complaints and handle them in a safe and confidential manner.
- **Beneficiary Accountability:** SODCC Parsa commits to promoting accountability towards our beneficiaries and the communities where we work by: (i) being transparent about SODCC Parsa programming, activities, and services beneficiaries are entitled to; (ii) raising awareness about SODCC Parsa Code of Conduct, safeguarding policies, and reporting channels; (iii) actively seeking feedback from communities on SODCC Parsa work, individual behaviors, and complaints; and (iv) presenting feedback to communities on what changes have been made resulting from community feedback ideally by a senior SODCC Parsa representative. The above steps should occur regularly throughout the lifecycle of the program or activity.
- **Safe Programming:** SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel are required to take proactive measures to avoid causing inadvertent harm to civilians, contribute to actively reduce existing threats and ensure programs are conflict sensitive. This includes embedding good practice and SHEA prevention measures throughout the program and project cycle, including project design, grant proposals, assessments, complaints and feedback mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES –

- **All SODCC Parsa Employees and Related-Personnel:** Everyone who works on behalf of SODCC Parsa is required to report any suspicions or incidences of SHEA of others. Failure to report to a relevant person suspicion of SHEA relating to someone else is a breach of SODCC Parsa policy, and could lead to disciplinary action being taken against employees and the termination of SODCC Parsa relationship with non-employees. There is no obligation for an individual to report any incident that has happened to them.
- **Trustees and Directors:** SODCC Parsa Executive Director, Safeguarding officer and program focal person, hold overall accountability for this policy and its implementation.
- **SODCC Parsa Affiliate's Executive Director:** Each SODCC Parsa Affiliate's ED is responsible for the application of this policy within their own affiliate.
- **SG Focal Points:** Provide support to prevent and respond to SHEA alongside their substantive roles. Raising awareness and promoting best practices by receiving concerns, supporting survivors and reporting concerns in a confidential manner within their Affiliate channel.
- **SG Leads/Officers:** Provide support to Focal Points, staff and programs to prevent and respond to SHEA. Raising awareness, conducting training and promoting best practices,



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as well as receiving concerns, conducting referrals to specialized services and supporting investigations. SG Leads/SG Teams/Officers and senior management should offer further support to help implement this policy.

- **Program Managers:** Responsible for promoting awareness of this policy with people they manage and for supporting/developing systems that create and maintain a safe working environment. This also includes the responsibility for ensuring that all staff and Related Personnel receive regular PSEA trainings, with a particular emphasis on staff who are in direct contact with the people we serve. Program Manager should prioritize PSEA awareness raising for themselves and their divisions, individual departments or teams, and provide budget lines for some activities.
- **Program Teams:** Consult with to ensure that beneficiaries and those working on behalf of SODCC Parsa are familiar with SODCC Parsa Code of Conduct, how to raise complaints and concerns, and that SODCC Parsa will take action when the cases reported or happen. Program Teams should also clearly explain what goods and/or services the beneficiaries are entitled to make sure and how beneficiaries are selected.

Executive Director leads from affiliates and responsible for reviewing and updating this policy annually. This will be in line with legislative and organizational developments, feedback and lessons learned.

5. RAISING A COMPLAINT OR CONCERN:

SODCC Parsa Employees and Related Personnel have a responsibility to report any suspicion or concern of SHEA. Any individual can raise a concern/complaint to SODCC Parsa about an incident they have experienced, witnessed, or heard about concerning an SODCC Parsa staff member or partner (suppliers, partners, contractor, etc.) without fear of retribution. Oxfam Employees and Related Personnel must not investigate allegations or suspicions themselves.

5.1 Reporting Channels:

Anyone (including SODCC Parsa beneficiaries) can raise a concern or make a complaint to SODCC Parsa about something they have experienced or witnessed without fear of retribution. You can do this verbally or in writing to your country team or Executing/Home Affiliate's safeguarding officer, Focal Point, Safeguarding Team or using the whistleblowing helpline service. If your Employing Affiliate does not have a Safeguarding Team, a dedicated whistleblowing helpline or if you simply prefer, you can use SODCC Parsa GB's Whistleblowing Service which is available to all SODCC Parsa Affiliates and program teams. Employees can also choose to raise concerns with their Line Manager or Human Resources team member.

5.2 Confidentiality:

Complaints can be made anonymously. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process. Information that identifies individuals involved in a complaint will be limited to essential personnel and will not be shared further without obtaining the informed consent of those involved, except if someone's life is at risk, a child is at risk, or as required by law in consultation with legal counsel and where safe to do so. Non-identifying information will be shared as per reporting requirements. Staff involved in the complaints process will be made aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality and may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Employees who breach confidentiality may be subject to



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disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and others who work with SODCC Parsa may have their relationship with SODCC Parsa terminated. In some cases, such breaches may constitute breaking the law.

5.3 Retaliation against Complainants, Survivors and Witnesses;

SODCC Parsa will take action against anyone, whether they are the subject of a complaint or not, who seek or carry out retaliatory action against complainants, survivors or other witnesses. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Others who work with SODCC Parsa may have their relationship with SODCC Parsa terminated.

5.4 Complaints about SODCC Parsa Partners:

Where SODCC Parsa receives a complaint about a partner organization, it will expect the partner to respond safely, quickly and appropriately. SODCC Parsa will assist the partner to ascertain its reporting obligations. Where appropriate, SODCC Parsa will work with the partner to address the issue through an appropriate independent investigation. If the outcome is that abuse has occurred, ongoing work with the partner cannot involve the individual(s) concerned. If there is reason to believe that an allegation of abuse has been dealt with inappropriately by a partner, then they risk withdrawal of funding or ending the relationship (including networks and consortium).

5.5 Receiving Complaints about External Organizations/Bodies:

Safeguarding complaints raised to SODCC Parsa about other organizations/bodies should be referred to the affiliate safeguarding teams, who will report cases to the relevant organizations involved where safe to do so, as well as local PSEA working groups, networks, and/or the charity commission/police/donors where appropriate and safe to do so. SODCC Parsa will not investigate cases related to other organizations, but does have an obligation to report to related government and non-government organizations for proper investigation and justice.



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