

POLICY (0560) – PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (“PSEA”)

Scope

This policy applies to all World Relief (US, OCN and LCN) personnel (defined herein). The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe environment, free of sexual exploitation and abuse, in all locations World Relief implements programs. World Relief recognizes that sexual exploitation and abuse harms the very people we are mandated to protect and is one of the most serious breaches of accountability. World Relief values the example of Jesus and seeks to follow Jesus in living holy, humble and honest lives. World Relief believes that people are made in the image of God and seeks to understand and respect the diversity of peoples we serve.

Principles

World Relief sets forth the Principles (taken in part from Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Core Principles) below. World Relief requires that its personnel comply with these Principles. In some instances, World Relief’s policies are more stringent and are set forth herein if such cases.

1. All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection from harm.
2. Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
3. Organizations have a duty of care to children and vulnerable adults with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
4. If organizations work with partners, churches and community-based organizations, they have a responsibility to help them meet the minimum requirements on safeguarding.
5. All actions on safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult, which are paramount.
6. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
7. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
8. Sexual activity with vulnerable adults is prohibited.
9. 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 exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

10. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are prohibited since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

11. 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.

12. 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.

Definitions within Policy

Safeguarding- Is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations and programs do no harm to children and vulnerable adults-that is, that they do not expose children and vulnerable adults to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about the safety of vulnerable adults and children within communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities and otherwise handled appropriately.

Child- Any person below the age of 18, regardless of national laws or cultural practices, which may stipulate a younger age.

Vulnerable Adult- Any person aged 18 or over, if:

- A) The adult has particular care, support or special needs, and as a result abuse occurs when the vulnerable adult is mistreated, neglected or harmed by another personal who holds a position of trust.
- B) The adult is dependent or reliant on others for the provision of basic services (not limited to, for example, safety, shelter, water, food), because of their particular context, or
- C) The adult is in a relationship (work or social) or in contact with another adult who seeks to misuse their position of authority or trust to control, coerce, manipulate or dominate them.

Sexual exploitation— Any actual or attempted abuse of 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.

Sexual abuse—Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force, coercion or under unequal conditions.

Humanitarian worker— All workers engaged by humanitarian agencies, whether internationally or nationally recruited, or formally or informally retained from the beneficiary community, to conduct the activities of that agency.

Personnel— All humanitarian workers carrying out World Relief business, volunteering with World Relief, or obligated to fulfill duties for which World Relief has contracted. This includes World Relief employees, volunteers, consultants, secondees, visitors, Board members and members of organizations which are partnering with World Relief on programs or projects. Definition as “personnel” herein is not an admission that a person is an employee of World Relief.

Policy

World Relief is committed to the protection and welfare of those we serve, and we uphold the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 63/214 of the United Nations and the IASC principles defined above. World Relief has an obligation and duty of care for the men, children, and women involved in our programs and will not tolerate sexually abusive or exploitative acts by any associated personnel.

All personnel are required to uphold this policy and to immediately report any violations of it. World Relief has a duty to ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are investigated and that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken. Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment if the personnel is an employee, and removal from duties and dismissal from one’s humanitarian worker role with World Relief if personnel is other than an employee.

With a zero-tolerance policy for exploitative and abusive relationships, World Relief personnel are strictly prohibited from engaging in:

- Any act of sexual abuse and exploitation, or other form of sexually humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior.
- Any type of sexual contact with children under the age of 18 (mistaken belief of age being is not a legitimate defense) – please see *Child Protection Policy 0565, Protection of Children Code of Conduct - 0566 and Mandatory Report of Child Abuse or Neglect Policy - 0567*.
- Any act of sexual abuse and exploitations with vulnerable adults, as defined herein.
- Use of children or adults to procure sexual services for others.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex with prostitutes or others.
- Any sexual favor in exchange of assistance provided to beneficiaries of such assistance, such as food, access to services, or other items provided to beneficiaries.
- Visits to brothels or places which are declared off-limits.
- Any sexual contact or intimate relationships with World Relief beneficiaries.

Commitments

Managers and supervisors must ensure that all World Relief personnel understand and comply with this policy and the Core Principles, as well as the related standards of conduct and supporting policies. To implement this policy and ensure the protection and welfare of those we serve, World Relief and its managers and supervisors commit to:

1. Develop organization-specific strategies **to prevent** sexual exploitation and abuse.
 - a. Incorporating PSEA training in induction materials for new personnel within the first two months of start date.
 - b. Conducting criminal background checks on all new personnel.
 - c. Conducting yearly PSEA refresher training for all personnel.
 - d. Conducting regular awareness sessions for project beneficiaries regarding PSEA, that services provided by World Relief are free, and to clearly communicate reporting mechanisms.
 - e. Incorporating responsibilities to ensure effective implementation of PSEA strategies in specific personnel roles (such as staff training, coordinating yearly high-level review and progress report of PSEA strategies).
 - f. Conducting managerial level oversight of Sexual Abuse Reports received and actions taken to monitor effectiveness, report progress, and improve efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.
 - g. Reviewing and revising as necessary World Relief's PSEA policies every five years.

2. Develop organization-specific strategies to **respond** to incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes:
 - Establishing clear complaint and response mechanisms in all program locations with designated focal point. World Relief has provided such mechanisms through its Whistle-blower Policy #0513 and Child Protection Policy #0565.
 - Conducting yearly refresher PSEA training for focal points.
 - Taking immediate and appropriate action to protect persons who report violations of sexual exploitation and abuse.
 - Providing necessary and appropriate assistance to all victims, in accordance with their wishes and the recommendations of trained professionals. Taking action to protect persons from retaliation when allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are made in good faith.
 - Investigating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving World Relief personnel in a timely and professional manner. This includes the use of confidential, safe and appropriate interviewing practices with complainants and witnesses, especially children, and



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engaging professional investigators or external expertise when necessary.

3. In compliance with applicable laws and to the best of our abilities, prevent perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse from being rehired or redeployed by World Relief.
4. Ensure all partnership agreements:
 - a. incorporate this Policy as an attachment or provide proof of their own PSEA policy;
 - b. include the appropriate language requiring contracting entities and individuals, and their employees and volunteers to comply with this Policy; and
 - c. expressly state that the failure of those entities or individuals, as appropriate, to take preventive measures against sexual exploitation and abuse, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective actions when sexual exploitation or abuse has occurred, shall constitute grounds for World Relief to terminate such agreements.
5. Engage the support of communities and governments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Personnel Standards

World Relief affirms that the capacity to achieve our vision and mission depends upon each of us, individually and collectively. To this end, all World Relief personnel must uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct and abide by World Relief's policies. At all times, World Relief personnel must treat the local communities, staff of partner organizations and their colleagues with respect and dignity.

The need for this Policy flows from a recognition that our work often puts World Relief personnel in positions of power in relation to the communities we work with, especially vulnerable adults and children. We have an obligation to use our power respectfully and must not abuse the power and influence we have over the lives and well-being of the participants of our programs and others in the communities where World Relief works.

This policy establishes the standards to be followed by all World Relief personnel. Any violation of this policy is serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment/duties, in accordance with disciplinary procedures of World Relief, or its partners or affiliates, and applicable laws.



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Form 05-1 Certification of Having Read and Understood World Relief Policies

*To be signed by **all** World Relief personnel. A copy will be kept on file with the Director of HR and/or within the program or country office.*

I declare that:

I have read and understand World Relief's Policies below:

- Policy 0560 | Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Policy 0565 | Protection of Children Policy
- Policy 0566 | Protection of Children Code of Conduct
- Policy 0501 | Standards of Conduct
- Policy 0567 | Mandatory Report of Child Abuse or Neglect Policy
- Policy 0570 | Human Trafficking
- Policy 0513 | Whistle Blower Policy

I have not been accused or convicted of any offense involving the physical, mental/emotional or sexual abuse or exploitation of any individual.

I commit to working within the parameters of the above policy and ensuring the protection and welfare of those WR serves.

I understand that if a complaint of sexual exploitation or abuse is brought against me, it will be thoroughly investigated by the appropriate authorities. I understand that if there is a violation of any of the above policy, it is a serious misconduct and can result in immediate discipline, including but not limited to dismissal from my humanitarian aid worker role.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____



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Revision Log	
Date	Description
June 1, 2012	Policy adopted
February 27, 2017	Edit UN suggested guidance set forth in this policy on sexual relationships between beneficiaries and staff ("strongly discouraged") to mirror World Relief's Policy 0551 as prohibited."
March 28, 2017	Revisions and Edits
April 4, 2017	Revised formatting to incorporate new corporate logo
April 4, 2018	Typo Edited to read: "any sexual contact or intimate relationships with World Relief beneficiaries."
June 27, 2018	Edits to include: additional Principles related to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children; definitions of Safeguarding, Child and Vulnerable Adult; clarification of language that Policy applies to vulnerable adults. Updated with new logo.