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|  | Policy Family: Governance & Management | |
| | Policy Title: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy | |
| | Policy number: HFHV-GM-PP-002 | Version: 01 |

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| Issuing department: | National Office | Author: | Hoan Tran |
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Policy history

| Version | Date | Remark of changes | Author | Reviewers | Approver |
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| 01 | | First release | Hoan Tran, Bells Borja | | Bells Borja |

I. Introduction

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) are violations of basic human rights. Habitat for Humanity Vietnam (HFHV) aims to provide a safe and trusted environment that safeguards everyone from SEAH including beneficiary communities, staff, volunteers, consultants, and partner organizations. HFHV is committed to safeguarding the people HFHV helps and with whom HFHV works.

The nature of HFHV's development workplaces staff in positions of authority and trust in relation to the communities we serve, especially vulnerable adults and children and a wide range of volunteers. It is therefore essential that appropriate SEAH risk management practices are embedded into the organization that are consistently applied and reinforced, as outlined in this Policy.

HFHV's SEAH is guided by the principles under the HFHV Internal Labor Regulations, Habitat for Humanity Australia PSEAH Policy (2019) and the HFHV Safeguarding Policy (2022).

HFHV's PSEAH are reviewed every two years and re-ratified by HFHV's Leadership Team. The frequency of the review may be adjusted to comply with any changes to relevant Laws in Vietnam, HFHI and HFHA Safeguarding Policies.


Definition of Terms

Stakeholder: Includes National Director, Leadership Members, Staff (fulltime, part-time, casual), consultants, contractors, interns, volunteers, agents, and partners.

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.

Sexual abuse: Any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal power dynamics or otherwise coercive conditions.

Sexual harassment: A person sexually harasses another person if the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favors or engages in other unwelcome conduct

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of a sexual nature, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out HFHV’s approach to preventing sexual exploitation abuse and harassment associated with the work that it does. It sets out:

- Principles upon which HFHV will base SEAH decision-making and actions
- Expectations of conduct of all who represent HFHV, including recruitment, screening and employment processes
- Specific prohibited practices for those who represent HFHV
- How HFHV will assess SEAH risk and ensure appropriate conduct at all times
- HFHV commitments to regular training for Stakeholders
- HFHV commitments to reporting and investigation procedures that ensure SEAH issues are identified and effective action is taken.

3. Policy Statement

HFHV takes a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of SEAH and maintains an organizational culture that prioritizes safeguarding against SEAH. HFHV will make it readily accessible for any person affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled confidentially, sensitively, and appropriately.

HFHV Stakeholders have an obligation to uphold high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times and must not breach positions of trust in order to impact another person through sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, sexual violence, bullying, fraternization, or any other abuse of power.

HFHV prohibits transactional sex for all Stakeholders while engaged in HFHV activities. This Policy addresses the sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment of adults. It does not replace HFHV’s Child Protection Policy.

HFHV Stakeholders must also comply with the complementary provisions of the HFHV’s Complaints Policy, the HFHV’s Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy, the HFHV’s Child Protection Policy, and Code of Conduct, and the HFHV Use of Photos and Stories Policy.

4. Policy in Practice


4.1. Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) occur when people in power exploit or abuse vulnerable people for sexual purposes. HFHV Stakeholders must conduct themselves professionally and appropriately at all times and never engage in conduct which could involve or be perceived as involving any form of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.

4.2. Application of Policy

This Policy applies to all Stakeholders involved in HFHV activities.

4.3. Assessing Risk

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HFHV maintains an organizational enterprise risk register (and separate programs-projects risk register) which identifies potential SEAH risks to any Stakeholder or beneficiary.

PSEAH and Child Protection clauses clearly identify safeguarding risks, management and reporting in all Partnership Agreements and Activity Agreements entered into by HFHV, with direct steps in communications with partners taken before execution to ensure all signatories and their staff are aware of their mutual obligations to manage safeguarding risks.

Project level SEAH risks are captured in risk management planning and monitoring processes of projects undertaken during project development and implementation by HFHV in collaboration with implementing partner organizations. Risk mitigation and monitoring strategies are included as part of these ongoing risk management processes.

Risk registers will be reviewed regularly as project initiatives change and updates to policies and procedures will be made at least every two years.

4.4. Recruitment, engagement, and management of Stakeholders

HFHV will ensure the protection, safety, security and well-being of Stakeholders and all people with whom HFHV works and supports.

Policies and procedures regarding the recruitment, engagement, and management of HFHV Stakeholders are contained in the HFHV Employee Handbook and in other relevant stand-alone HFHV policies.

Aligned with the HFHV Child Protection Policy and procedures, HFHV recruitment and engagement policy and processes require background screening including criminal history record checks and reference checks, in line with the Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) Safer Recruitment Toolkit.


The HFHV Employee Handbook contains the following policies, which are relevant to the safety, security and well-being of Stakeholders and beneficiaries:

- Weapon-free workplace policy
- Grievance policy
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy

The HFHV Internal Labor Regulations in accordance with the Labor Code of Vietnam and HFHI contains the following policies, which are relevant to the safety, security and well-being of Stakeholders and beneficiaries:

- Violence in the workplace
- Free Weapon and Drugs in the workplace
- Non-Harassment, bullying and Discrimination
- Ethics Covenant and Policies
- Whistleblowing Policy

The National Director, Staff (full-time, part-time, casual), interns, and volunteers are oriented on these policies and are required to sign their commitment to uphold all the policies in the Employee Handbook, Internal Labor Regulations, as well as the Code of Conduct as part of the induction process.

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The National Director, Staff (full-time, part-time, casual), interns, and volunteers will be trained annually on the requirements regarding the prevention and reporting of sexual misconduct, harassment, and child protection. Implementing partner organizations are also required by HFHV to conduct annual safeguarding training for staff and project teams.

HFHV will ensure there is a person responsible for managing PSEAH matters including policy reviews, staff training, and complaint handling and reporting.

HFHV’s Global Village (GV) and Local Village (LV) volunteers receive HFHV policies and code of conduct and briefings outlining the safety, security and expected behaviours while on a Volunteering Program. These include a HFHV Volunteer Manual, Child Safeguarding Briefing, Code of Conduct, Incident and Emergency Management Process. Complaint mechanisms (i.e., HFHV Community-Based Feedback Mechanism, and/or HEAL platform) will be explained to both volunteers and community members to ensure they know how to report alleged abuse and action can be taken quickly. They will, likewise, receive the Code of Conduct briefing before going on-site.

4.5 Partner Obligations

HFHV protects Stakeholders and beneficiaries from discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect based on an analysis of the context in which they are working or are located. HFHV contracted partners must comply with this Policy. Staff, volunteers, and contractors/subcontractors or partners must also be familiar with and comply with the contents of this Policy. Safeguarding risk management requirements are captured in HFHV Partnership Agreements and Project level Agreements with implementing partner organizations.

HFHV employs the Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment - Safeguarding Risk Assessment to assist partners to meet compliance requirements on an annual basis, at a minimum. These checks are conducted in conjunction with the HFHV safeguarding self-assessment process that commenced in 2021 to identify capacity strengthening needs and appropriate actions to address them. These mechanisms support HFHV in addressing and exceeding minimum PSEAH standards of local safeguarding policies, safe recruitment, and training practices for stakeholders and downstream partners, community based SEAH reporting mechanisms through HFHV’s CBFM, safe use of stories and photos and the existence of a safeguarding focal point.


New partners likewise undergo the Partner Due Diligence process of HFHV.

4.6. Reporting protocols for potential abuse

HFHV requires and enables Stakeholders and beneficiaries to make SEAH complaints to the organization in a safe, transparent, and confidential manner. Any person may report or make a complaint in relation to alleged Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and/or Harassment that they have experienced, observed, or been made aware of in their role working with HFHV wherever it may occur.

HFHV has in place community-based feedback mechanisms (CBFM) within partner communities. The CBFM captures and facilitates reporting requirements from individuals in these communities. Any staff of HFHV who receives a complaint must immediately inform their direct supervisor confidentially.

If the staff has reason to believe that their direct supervisor may be involved in the alleged misconduct, that person must immediately notify the National Director, and use the Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line (HEAL), which is Habitat for Humanity’s confidential, anonymous reporting hotline

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and central tracking repository for allegations of misconduct. Implementing partners are strongly insisted to notify HFHV of any SEAH complaints immediately and safeguarding is included also as a standing agenda item in regular project team meetings to provide a safe forum to raise concerns.

The process for submitting a complaint is described in the HFHV Employee Handbook (Grievance Policy) or Community Based Feedback Mechanism, which outlines the processes for Stakeholders, beneficiaries, and the public, and links to the Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line are located on the HFHV website.

HFHV must immediately (within two working days of becoming aware of an alleged incident) report to respective Global Funding Network (GFN) partners (e.g., Habitat for Humanity Australia, Habitat for Humanity Korea), to DFAT any alleged incident of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment related to the delivery of DFAT funded activities, and to the corresponding in-country donor mission or delegation office in Vietnam any alleged incident of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment related to the delivery of program activities funded by them. HFHV must (within five working days of becoming aware of an alleged incident) report to HFHI, related GFN and DFAT any alleged Policy non-compliance related to the delivery of the activities.

All alleged SEAH incidents that involve a criminal aspect will be reported to local law enforcement agencies, if safe and in accordance to the wishes of the victim, or in the case of a child survivor, it is deemed in the best interest of the child.

4.7. Procedure for investigating alleged misconduct

Due to the potential seriousness and sensitivity of a complaint, the individual who receives a complaint should not start any investigations, but rather report the concern to the relevant direct supervisor and or to the **Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line** reporting tool. Confidentiality and sensitivity for the wishes of the survivor must be always maintained. HFHV's investigation process is described in the HFHV Child Protection Policy. As there may be circumstances where the performance of an investigation would increase the harm to the survivor, any actions will be taken only after full consideration of the safety and the informed consent of the survivor.

HFHV will act on every allegation in a fair and reasonable way with due regard for procedural fairness, confidentiality and welfare of the survivor. The basis for all decisions related to investigation performance or non-performance will be documented. Habitat for Humanity International will also be informed and support in any investigation of SEAH misconduct in Vietnam.

HFHV recognizes sexual exploitation and abuse as gross misconduct and perpetrators will face disciplinary action, including immediate termination of employment or engagement and referral for criminal prosecution in Vietnam and/or the relevant country, where appropriate.

5.8. Obligations to survivors

Support for potential victims of misconduct (or survivors) will be provided regardless of the status or outcome of an investigation. Upon receipt of an allegation of safeguarding misconduct, HFHV will, in partnership with HFHI and in accordance with HFHI Safeguarding Policy, consider providing various forms of survivor assistance, as appropriate depending on the nature of the allegations, the circumstances involved, and the informed consent of the survivor. This includes immediate material care, facilitating health and psychosocial support and legal/advocacy support.