

Al-Aghsan Foundation for Agriculture and Environment Development



Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (PSEA)

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all Al-Aghsan Foundation employees, our beneficiaries and the communities that we serve, are protected from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. This Policy applies to the Al-Aghsan Foundation Board, employees, and to all paid and unpaid consultants, contractors, interns, and volunteers that provide supplies, services or support, to Al-Aghsan Foundation or promote its work at any location in Iraq. All such parties are referred to as “employee” in this document.

This policy also applies to Al-Aghsan Foundation’s partners, vendors and other third parties, where it is included or referenced in relevant bid or tender documents, agreements, memorandums, purchase orders or contracts.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Aghsan Foundation takes a zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). It can occur when people in power exploit or abuse vulnerable people/populations for sexual purposes. Often there can be unequal power dynamics/relations across an organization and in relation to beneficiaries and communities we work with and as such we face a risk that some staff may exploit their position of power for personal gain. Al-Aghsan Foundation will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and considers such acts as serious misconduct, which constitutes grounds for disciplinary measures. This extends to all employees, partners or any other representatives associated with the delivery of our work. Al-Aghsan Foundation takes seriously its duty and acknowledges the particular vulnerability of women, girls, at risk adults and boys to sexual exploitation and abuse. Al-Aghsan Foundation undertakes an obligation not to put women, girls and boys at risk by ensuring that all efforts are made to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse to beneficiaries, the communities we serve and our employees. This policy builds on Al-Aghsan Foundation’s Code of Conduct and other associated policies and procedures.

PURPOSE

Al-Aghsan Foundation Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy has been developed to ensure all Al-Aghsan Foundation employees make ethical decisions to ensure the maximum protection of our beneficiaries, our communities, our employees and our organization from exploitation and abuse. We have developed our policy in accordance with the principles of the

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United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Al-Aghsan Foundation believes all people have a right to live their lives free from fear and any form of abuse of power regardless of age, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or ethnic origin.

AL-AGHSAN FOUNDATION'S MAIN PRINCIPLES OF PSEA

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse by Al-Aghsan Employees constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of the majority or age of consent locally.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior by Al-Aghsan Foundation employees is prohibited. This includes the exchange of assistance that is due to our beneficiaries.
4. Sexual relationships between Al-Aghsan Foundation and beneficiaries are not allowed. They are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.
5. Where an Al-Aghsan Foundation employee develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation and child abuse by a fellow worker, whether in Al-Aghsan Foundation or not, he or she must immediately report such concerns using the established reporting mechanisms.
6. Al-Aghsan Foundation Employees are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse and promotes the implementation of this Policy. Al-Aghsan Foundation managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems, which maintain this environment.

COMMITMENT

Al-Aghsan Foundation is committed to fulfilling the six principles through implementation of the following Commitments. This includes time-bound, measurable indicators of progress to enable all entities of Al-Aghsan Foundation's, and others, to monitor Al-Aghsan Foundation's performance:

1. Develop organization-specific strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse, including incorporating appropriate job responsibilities (such as staff training, complaints and response mechanisms, and coordinating high-level oversight and progress reports by directors) in specific staff positions to support and ensure effective

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implementation of organization strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

2. Undertake risk assessments to identify areas of risks and document steps that are being taken to remove or reduce these risks.

3. Incorporate Al-Aghsan Foundation's standards on sexual exploitation and abuse and child protection in relevant codes of conduct and in induction materials and training courses for Al-Aghsan Foundation employees, including specific provisions for child sexual exploitation and abuse.

4. Ensure that when engaging in partnerships, consortia, sub-grant or sub-recipient agreements, these agreements

a) incorporate this policy as an attachment;

b) include the appropriate language requiring such contracting entities and individuals, and their employees and volunteers to abide with a Code of Conduct that is pursuant to the standards of 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 and child abuse, to investigate and report allegations thereof, or to take corrective actions when sexual exploitation or abuse or child abuse has occurred, shall constitute grounds for Al-Aghsan to terminate such agreements.

5. Regularly inform Al-Aghsan Foundation employees, beneficiaries and communities on measures taken to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse. Such information should be developed and disseminated in cooperation with other relevant agencies and should include details on complaint mechanisms, the status and outcome of investigations in general terms, feedback on actions taken against perpetrators, and follow-up measures taken as well as assistance available to complainants and survivors. Any information that is not of a general nature and concerns specific cases must respect confidentiality for all parties involved, including the survivor and family, employee and the ongoing investigation process, particularly where there are legal implications.

6. Engage the support of communities and governments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse by Al-Aghsan Foundation Employees.

7. Ensure that complaint mechanisms for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse are accessible and that Al-Aghsan Foundation focal points for receiving complaints understand how to discharge their duties. This should include a documented reporting procedure in a relevant local language for sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse allegations and policy for noncompliance, including available sanctions for breaches.

8. Provide support and assistance to complainants of sexual exploitation and abuse or child abuse. This may include medical treatment, legal assistance and psychosocial support as appropriate and according to the wants and needs of the survivor whilst also taking account of confidentiality, cultural sensitivities and survivor safety.

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9. In compliance with applicable laws, prevent perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse from being (re)hired or (re)deployed. Managers and Human Resource teams must ensure robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel, particularly for personnel who will have any direct or indirect contact with children. This could include use of background and criminal reference/ record checks, verbal referee checks, and interview plans that incorporate behavioral-based interview questions.

10. Investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse in a timely and professional manner. This includes the use of appropriate interviewing practices with complainants and witnesses, particularly with children.

11. Take swift and appropriate action, including legal action when required, against Al-Aghsan Foundation's employees who commit sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse. This may include: administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant authorities for appropriate action, including criminal prosecution.

12. Take appropriate actions to the best of Al-Aghsan Foundation's abilities to protect persons from retaliation where allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or child abuse are reported involving Al-Aghsan Foundation employees.

13. Ensure high-level oversight and information systems on sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse reports received and actions taken, in order to monitor effectiveness, report progress and improve efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and child abuse.

REPORTING

It is the obligation of all Al-Aghsan staff to raise concerns or suspicions they have whether they be actual or perceived. Concerns must be raised internally by an employee to his/her line manager or any senior manager with whom they feel comfortable. The country director is the key responsible for receiving SEA complaints and take the required action.