



Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy





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Introduction

The Quantum Foundation holds itself to the highest standards of ethics and integrity, ensuring that every aspect of its operations reflects a steadfast commitment to safeguarding the safety and well-being of all individuals, particularly those vulnerable groups within society, especially women and children. Recognizing the paramount importance of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, the Foundation diligently works to establish robust guidelines and procedures that align with the expectations set forth by the United Nations. With a zero-tolerance approach for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), the Quantum Foundation upholds its responsibility to protect these vulnerable individuals and to create a culture of respect and dignity in all interactions. By implementing comprehensive prevention measures, fostering awareness, and providing necessary support, the Foundation strives to create an environment free from these violations.

The Quantum Foundation's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy is informed by International Human Rights Law, United Nations' standards, and best practice guidelines from the humanitarian sector. The development of this policy is greatly influenced by key documents that encompass these principles, ensuring that the foundation's approach aligns with global standards and the best interests of the foundations beneficiaries, namely:

- United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Protection Against Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct and Cooperating with Authorized Audits or Investigations (ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1)
- IASC Minimum Operating Standards; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel (2012);
- The Global Review of protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel, July 2010
- The Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel, August 2008
- The United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, June 2002

Definitions

“Beneficiaries”

All persons who receive services and assistance from the Quantum Foundation are considered beneficiaries.

“Partners”

Individuals, organizations, or entities that the Quantum Foundation collaborates with in its activities or programs.

“Perpetrator”

A person (or group of persons) who commits an act of SEA or other type of crime or offence.

“Sexual abuse”

Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

“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.

“Staff”

All employees, contractors, volunteers, or any other persons engaged by the Quantum Foundation

“Victim”

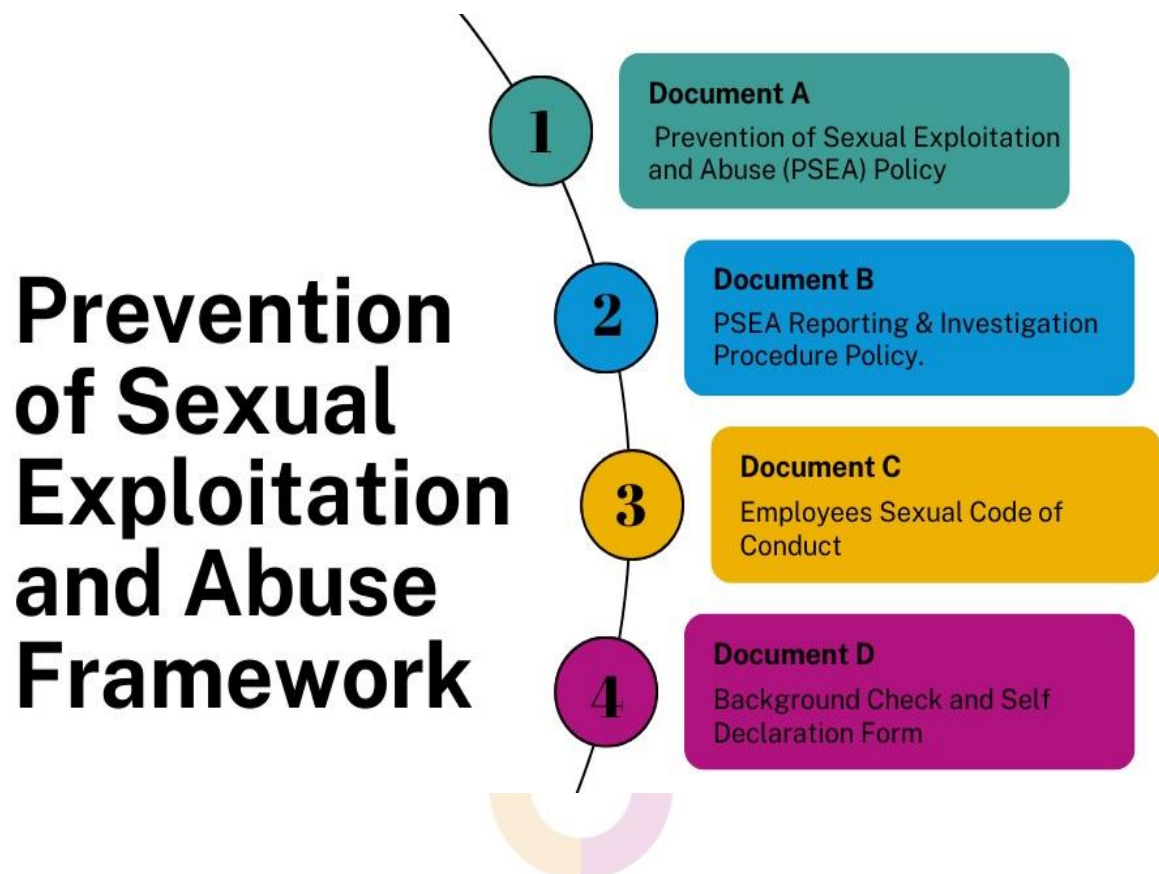
A person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused

“Vulnerable Individuals”

Any persons who rely on services and assistance from the Quantum Foundation, especially women and children

PSEA Framework

This Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy is one component of a comprehensive PSEA Framework.



Scope of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy

This framework extends its applicability to all personnel associated with the Quantum Foundation, including full-time, part-time, and temporary Staff, and collaborating Partners. It applies comprehensively to all operations, initiatives, and endeavors undertaken by or on behalf of the Foundation, regardless of the specific context in which they occur. The framework's scope ensures a consistent and inclusive approach to preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse throughout the Quantum Foundation's activities, reinforcing its commitment to safeguarding the well-being and dignity of all individuals involved.

Staff of the Quantum Foundation must therefore adhere to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Therefore, staff must:

1. Not engage in sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18), regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally, with mistaken belief of age being no defence.
2. Not exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex. This includes engaging in sexual favors or any other forms of behavior that are humiliating, degrading, or exploitative. Such actions are strictly prohibited, including the exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
3. Not engage in any sexual relationship with a beneficiary or vulnerable person that involves the improper use of rank or position.
4. Report any concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow staff member, whether in the same agency or not, through established agency reporting mechanisms. It is the duty of the staff member to bring such concerns forward.

5. Oblige themselves to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, while actively promoting the implementation of their code of conduct.

Prevention

The Quantum Foundation is dedicated to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all individuals. To achieve this, clear codes of conduct, policies, and guidelines will be established, explicitly prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse, and communicated to all staff. This can be found in the Quantum Foundation Employee Sexual Code of Conduct and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy respectively.

Additionally, the Foundation is committed to providing comprehensive and regular training to all staff, emphasizing the principles of respect, consent, and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Some of the resources which the Foundation is committed to utilizing is the Inter-Agency Standing committee (IASC) Learning Package on Protection from Sexual Misconduct for UN Partner Organizations, as well as the UNICEF Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) e-learning course.

To further safeguard against such incidents, stringent recruitment processes will be implemented, incorporating rigorous screening, background checks, and verification procedures to prevent individuals with a history of sexual exploitation and abuse from joining the organization.

Moreover, the Foundation will actively foster an organizational culture that encourages reporting, accountability, and transparency, ensuring that all incidents are promptly addressed, and appropriate measures are taken to ensure the well-being and safety of vulnerable persons.

Responsibilities

Management team

The management team bears the responsibility of supporting and developing systems that uphold the effective application of the PSEA Policy, by providing technical support. Management must also ensure that their staff and related personnel understand and comply with PSEA Policy.

All Staff

Every staff member has a responsibility to report any observed or suspected cases of sexual exploitation and abuse promptly and unequivocally. Staff are also required to adhere to the associated Code of Conduct and must sign to acknowledge said commitment to the Code of Conduct.

Reporting and Response

The Quantum Foundation is committed to establishing safe and accessible reporting mechanisms that prioritize the confidentiality and safety of survivors and whistleblowers.

We will provide individuals with clear information and support on how to report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Appropriate actions will be taken against individuals found responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse, including implementing disciplinary measures, pursuing legal action, and cooperating with relevant authorities.

All reports will be promptly and thoroughly investigated in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner, ensuring the safety and well-being of survivors throughout the entire process. This process is clearly delineated within the Foundation's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy

In order to protect and maintain the confidentiality of individuals reporting allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, the following measures are implemented:

- a) Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are to be treated with utmost confidentiality, disclosed strictly on a need-to-know basis and in compliance with laws.
- b) The establishment of clear guidelines and procedures handling allegations.
- c) Confidential reporting procedures to ensure individuals have secure and safe channels to report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- d) Collected investigation information is to be securely stored and restricted to authorized personnel responsible for resolution. Any breaches of confidentiality shall be subject to disciplinary action.

- e) The Quantum Foundation shall take appropriate steps to ensure that individuals making allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are protected from any form of retaliation or reprisal. Confidentiality shall be maintained throughout the investigation process, and the identity of the individuals involved shall be disclosed only to those directly involved in the investigation or as required by law.

Training

The Quantum Foundation shall provide appropriate training and awareness programs to all its staff, partners, and stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of maintaining confidentiality and handling allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse with the utmost sensitivity.

Support and Care

The Quantum Foundation recognizes its responsibility to provide immediate assistance and support to individuals who may be victims of sexual exploitation or abuse. This assistance is initiated upon receiving any information indicating such victimization, regardless of the source or credibility of the allegation.

The guiding principles on the provision of assistance and support, as outlined in this policy, should be communicated clearly to the victims, and affected populations. They should also be made aware of the obligation of all Quantum Foundation staff and related personnel to report allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Quantum Foundation prioritizes partnering with existing service providers through partnerships with local groups and service providers to ensure that survivors receive thorough and appropriate care. Referrals for assistance should align with established gender-based violence and child protection referral pathways within the respective country.

Assistance and support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse should be provided in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Whenever feasible, a designated case manager or service provider with expertise and capacity should be assigned to coordinate support. The assistance provided should be tailored to the specific needs of each victim.

Common services for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse include:

- **Safety and protection:** Developing immediate safety or protection plans, including relocation support when necessary.
- **Medical care:** Providing necessary treatment, including HIV post-exposure treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis, and reproductive and sexual health care.
- **Psychosocial support:** Offering basic psychosocial support, psychological first aid, and facilitating referrals to specialized mental health care.
- **Education, livelihood support, and basic material assistance:** Addressing immediate needs through provisions such as food, clothing, shelter, school re-integration, and livelihood support.
- **Legal services:** Referring victims to legal assistance providers.
- **Support for children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse:** Assisting victims in pursuing paternity and child support claims, in coordination with relevant authorities.

In cases where existing services are unavailable, the Quantum Foundation will utilize internal resources to aid and support.

Special Considerations for Children

The Quantum Foundation recognizes the heightened vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation and abuse and adopts a child-sensitive approach in responding to child victims. This approach ensures compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, considering non-discrimination, best interests of the child, right to life, survival, and development, evolving capacity, and the right to express their views.

Determining the best interests of the child requires ongoing assessments to protect their safety, security, and well-being. In cases involving child victims, consultation with child centered organizations is essential, and child protection procedures compliant with the United Nations Approach to Justice for Children should be followed.

Interaction with child victims should be conducted by professionals with the necessary expertise and training. Assistance and support should be provided by child protection actors or in coordination with them, recognizing the specific needs of child victims. Attention and appropriate measures should also be given to adults who were victimized as children.

Informed consent in cases involving children includes the consent of the child, according to their evolving capacities, and the child's parent, legal guardian. However, if informing the parents or caregivers would endanger the child, consent may be obtained without their involvement.

During investigations or legal processes, child victims should receive appropriate assistance, including accompaniment by trained professionals when it is in their best interests. Clear information should be provided to children about the process, and psychosocial support should be available during interviews, considering the child's developmental stage and capacities. The views of the child should be considered a significant factor in the decision-making process and issue resolution.

Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy contradicts the organization's values and objectives to protect and support the vulnerable. Individuals violating this policy will be investigated and face the relevant consequences which may include termination, suspension, legal prosecution, and reporting to relevant authorities, causing severe reputational damage to individuals and the organization.

It is the responsibility of everyone associated with the organization to understand and uphold this policy, participate in awareness programs, promptly reporting suspicions or incidents, and fully cooperating with investigations.

Prohibition of Retaliation

The Quantum Foundation firmly prohibits any form of reprisal aimed at individuals who report incidents of sexual exploitation or abuse, extend assistance in filing complaints, or partake in investigations. We guarantee that staff who raise genuine concerns of sexual exploitation or abuse or actively participate in any investigation or proceedings will not face adverse consequences concerning their employment terms and conditions. Discrimination or termination based on their involvement will not be tolerated.

Instances of alleged retaliation will undergo prompt and thorough examination. Should retaliation be confirmed, appropriate disciplinary measures, including potential dismissal, will be implemented.

Individuals who believe they have encountered retaliation due to their sincere reporting are strongly encouraged to immediately report such occurrences. The reporting procedure is outlined in The Quantum Foundation PSEA Reporting & Investigation Procedure Policy.

Policy Dissemination and Review

This policy shall be disseminated to all staff and will be easily accessible to the communities we serve. Quantum Foundation commits to conducting a comprehensive review of this policy and the entire PSEA Framework every two years, at a minimum, in line with industry standards. The Corporate Secretary of the Quantum Foundation is responsible for leading this review, in close collaboration with key internal stakeholders and external third-party providers.

