



PLAN INTERNATIONAL, INC.

PREVENTING SEXUAL

HARASSMENT, EXPLOITATION

AND ABUSE (PSHEA) POLICY

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| Functional Area | Executive and Governance Department |
| Business Owner | Plan International, Inc. Global Safeguarding Unit |
| Approved by | International Board |
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| Applicability and Exceptions | PII |
| Related Policies | Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People Global Policy on Values Conduct and Whistleblowing Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy (PII Policy) Grievance Policy (PII Policy) Disciplinary Policy (PII Policy) Whistleblowing Policy (PII Policy) PII Code of Conduct |

1. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy applies to Plan International Inc. (PII) and all of its country offices, Regional Hubs and Liaison Offices whether operating through a branch registration or through a subsidiary.
- 1.2 The Policy applies to all **Staff**¹ (regardless of nature and terms of association or contract), **Associates**¹ and **Visitors**¹ who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of this Policy.
- 1.3 In line with the Global Policy on Values, Conduct and Whistleblowing, which includes the Code of Conduct and the **Safeguarding**¹ Code of Conduct, this policy is binding on staff both in and outside of working hours and in all aspects of a staff member's life. All staff Associates and visitors can raise a complaint via the procedures outlined in this policy.
- 1.4 Individual Country Offices, Global and Regional Hubs or Liaison Offices may enact their own procedures which must be in line with PII Safeguarding procedures, regulations, or other regulatory documents, that enable compliance by its employees (and/or, when appropriate, contractors and other partners) with this policy. Where required by law or local practices, Country Offices, Global and Regional Hubs or Liaison Offices may enhance the standards and requirements set out in this policy.
- 1.5 Under this policy, any concerned person, **Child**¹, member of a community where Plan International works and/or **Programme Participant**¹ has the right to report any concerns, allegations or suspicions of **Sexual Harassment, Exploitation or Abuse**¹.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff, Associates and visitors understand:
 - the importance of preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) and their responsibility to ensure that they, their behaviour and work does not result in **Sexual Violence**¹ or **Harm**¹ against a child, programme participant, a member of staff, Associate or visitor.
 - their role in preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse, and the consequences of breaching this policy.
 - their responsibility to report any concerns relating to Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse and have access to clear guidelines on how to report suspected Abuse.
 - our commitment to upholding the highest level of personal and professional conduct amongst staff, Associates and visitors working in or visiting programming contexts, particularly humanitarian settings where vulnerabilities are increased, ensuring zero tolerance to inaction on reports of any and all forms of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

We are fully committed to

- Creating a safe and inclusive culture that allows children, programme participants, staff, Associates and visitors to thrive and feel secure while engaging with Plan International; and supports people to report any concerns and understand and exercise their rights.
- Addressing the drivers of gender inequality and unequal power relations that can lead to Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
- Strengthening and cultivating the capacity of all staff, Associates and visitors to prevent and respond in a timely, effective, safe, comprehensive and confidential manner to all complaints, allegations and incidents on Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse.
- Ensuring victims'/survivors' perspectives and voices are central to any efforts to prevent and respond to Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse and providing necessary support to Victims/Survivors.
- Ensuring procedural fairness to all parties, including those accused of inappropriate or harmful behaviours.

¹ Please see Appendix 1 for full definition

POLICY POSITION

- 3.1 As Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) is a high impact area amongst safeguarding risks, this policy sets out clear expectations and measures the organisation will take to prevent SHEA and ensure immediate action is taken in regard to reporting and responding to SHEA allegations.
- 3.2 We recognise that the organisation's culture informs all aspects of our work, behaviour and the experience of our **Stakeholders**¹. We are dedicated to building a culture free from abuse, discrimination, and harm.
- 3.3 We recognise that many forms of **Violence**¹ are rooted in abuses of power. This is especially apparent within the power imbalances inherent in the international aid sector, and within the wider social norms and structures in which we work. As a large international organisation, those working with Plan International have increased power; the organisation therefore has a duty to prevent and respond robustly to allegations of SHEA.
- 3.4 We recognise that gendered forms of SHEA disproportionately impacts women and girls, and our work recognises the impact on boys, men, transgender communities and gender non-binary people. We are committed to working with marginalised and oppressed groups, recognising the impact of SHEA on people living in poverty and people of different ethnicities, religions, race, class and abilities. We will listen to and learn from them and work to ensure that our Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) and Safeguarding approaches supports the work they do to promote their rights and live lives with dignity. We are committed to **Gender Responsive, Intersectional Safeguarding**¹, ensuring that all people, in all their diversity, who come into contact with Plan International Inc. through our work in humanitarian and development contexts are safe from abuse of that power and privilege.
- 3.5 Our overarching Safeguarding approach and policy positions related to safeguarding children and programme participants are outlined in the *Global Policy Safeguarding Children and Young People; Say Yes! To Keeping Children and Young People Safe and Protected* (hereafter referred to as the Safeguarding Policy).
- 3.6 Our overarching **Workplace Safeguarding**¹ approach and policy positions related to behaviours carried out between staff and Associates are outlined in the *Global Policy on Values Conduct and Whistleblowing*, the *PII Code of Conduct* and the *PII Harassment Bullying and Discrimination Policy*.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 This Policy is underpinned by the following set of principles which guide its implementation. These principles align with our organisation's values and our feminist leadership principles:

4.1.1 Zero tolerance for inaction

We believe that any form of harassment, exploitation or abuse is unacceptable and inaction on reports of SHEA will not be tolerated. We recognize that zero tolerance does not mean there will be no reports or incidents, nor does it mean that all reports of breaches will result in termination of contracts without due process and **Investigations**¹. Instead, zero tolerance for inaction means we will act on all safeguarding and SHEA concerns and allegations, ensuring that our actions are timely, appropriate, and centred on the best interest of the **Victim/Survivor**¹, taking into account their specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.

4.1.2 Survivor-Centred

All decisions and actions in response to Safeguarding and PSHEA concerns and allegations and breaches of this policy will be guided by the safety, rights, needs, wishes and empowerment of the victim/survivor, while ensuring procedural fairness to all parties. We will retain the privacy and dignity of the victim/survivor by maintaining confidentiality, treating them respectfully, involving them in decision making, as appropriate, and providing comprehensive information and committing to referrals and assistance to support the recovery and safety of the victim/survivor.

Referring incidents of a criminal nature to law enforcement or relevant authorities will be done after taking into account the wishes of an Adult victim/survivor, the best interest assessment of a child victim/survivor and the welfare and safety of all parties.

4.1.3 Equality and Inclusion

We recognise that imbalances in power and gender inequality are key drivers for SHEA. We recognize that in all societies in which we work, gender inequality exists, staff, Associates, and programme participants can ascribe to unequal gender norms and stereotypes and that the very nature of our work can create and maintain differential power and inequality.

We take an intersectional approach to PSHEA and safeguarding, which utilises appropriate measures to address gender bias and other forms of discrimination and violence which may arise as a result of a person's diverse identity and/or position in society. It supports the empowerment and inclusion of victim/survivors in the response process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and ultimately their increased safety and protection. Inequality, exclusion, and discrimination will be challenged and will not be tolerated.

4.1.4 Shared responsibility

All staff, Associates and visitors must be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy. Everybody has a responsibility to prevent SHEA and must take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and uphold the principles of the policy. In turn, we will work collaboratively with others to support and strengthen the capacity of partners, the sector and our global organisation to prevent and respond to SHEA.

4.1.5 Open and accountable

We are committed to openness and transparency and will hold ourselves to account for our commitment to preventing SHEA. Our leaders will set clear expectations and take personal and organisational responsibility to create a safe and inclusive environment to ensure a culture of equity and inclusion.

We will maintain our responsibility to inform programme participants, children and members of communities in which we work, staff, Associates and visitors of this policy and our commitments so that they understand how to exercise their rights and the means via which they can report any concerns related to SHEA.

In order to remain accountable to all staff, Associates, visitors and programme participants we will ensure safeguarding and PSHEA concerns can be raised and discussed; poor practice and inappropriate behaviours can be challenged and addressed; and PSHEA and safeguarding measures will be regularly reviewed and strengthened.

5. PROCESS/ REQUIREMENTS REPORTING

Please see the global guidelines on Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Issues for full details of reporting procedures.

- 5.1 It is mandatory for all staff, Associates and visitors to confidentially report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of SHEA and/or breaches of this policy immediately (or at least within 24 hours) using the relevant and/or country specific procedures.
- 5.2 We will take all concerns and reports of SHEA seriously and we will act on these reports immediately, with the highest priority, and in accordance with the guiding principles and our procedures. Where investigations are launched, they will be carried out by experienced and qualified professionals who are trained on sensitive investigations and a victim/survivor centred approach.
- 5.3 Reports constituting criminal offences will be referred to the relevant authorities, taking into account the wishes of an adult victim/survivor, the best interest assessment of a child victim/survivor and the safety of all parties.
- 5.4 No one will be victimised for making a complaint and Plan International is committed to working with **Complainants**¹ and victims/survivors to ensure they are central to any response, are not further harmed or disempowered by any processes, and receive support throughout.
- 5.5 Report pertaining to donor funded project or programme, with contractual reporting obligations, will be reported to the respective **National Organisation**¹ or Country Office by the Global Safeguarding Unit.

Please see Appendix 2 for SHEA incident reporting chain

SUPPORT OPTIONS

- 5.6 Support will be offered to Victims/Survivors/complainants regardless of whether a formal response is carried out (e.g. an investigation). Support will also be offered as appropriate to others involved in an incident management process, recognising the impact this can have, for example on witnesses and those accused of carrying out inappropriate or harmful behaviours. This can include specialist psycho-social counselling, medical support, legal support and/or access to other specialist and appropriate support as needed. Victims/Survivors and complainants can choose if and when they would like to take up the support options available to them. We are committed to learning from Victims/Survivors and being guided by them, where safe and appropriate to do so.
- 5.7 We are committed to collaboratively working with local NGOs; women's rights groups; government ministries, agencies and departments; to develop learning on safe, intersectional, and feminist support options and ensuring that the support options offered meet the needs of diverse Victims/Survivors.
- 5.8 We will ensure that cases are referred to appropriate professionals and organisations and that due diligence is taken to ensure that they act in line with our values and puts the welfare of all parties concerned as the highest priority.

SANCTIONS

- 5.9 Breaches of this policy will be investigated in accordance with appropriate procedures and contractual agreements. Referrals may be made to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which breach happened.
- 5.10 Any allegation/suspicion of a breach made against a member of staff, Associate or visitor will be dealt with as quickly as possible, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the victim/survivor and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- 5.11 Actions may be taken during an investigation stage that are intended to be precautionary and not a disciplinary sanction or an assumption of guilt.
- 5.12 Breaches may incur sanctions including disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal, termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements, and where relevant, appropriate legal or other such actions
- 5.13 If a legitimate concern is raised but proves to be unfounded on investigation no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of deliberately false and malicious accusations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for the breakdown of roles and responsibilities.

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

When used in this document:

“Abuse” includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or violence, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional ill-treatment or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other exploitation. Acts of abuse can also take place online through, for example, the web, social media or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent abuse. Abuse consists of anything which individuals, groups, institutions or organisations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to another’s wellbeing, dignity and survival and development.

“Associate” refers to a range of contracted paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support a Plan International Entity. It includes, among others, board members, volunteers (including community volunteers), interns, sponsors, researchers, donors, consultants and contractors, staff and/or representatives of partner organisations and local governments (when operating in partnership agreement with a Plan International Entity).

“Child” in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this Global policy, is defined as any person – girl, boy, young woman, young man, and children of other gender identities - under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1). (See definition of young person/people or youth below).

“Child Abuse” all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, Sexual Abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other Exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

“Complainant” This is the person making a complaint; it may be the person who experienced what is being reported (the victim/survivor), or it may be another person (a third-party complainant) who becomes aware of an issue and makes the complaint.

“Gender Responsive Intersectional Safeguarding”² is a safeguarding approach that:

- Takes full account of the individual’s gender and overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of the prejudice and/or inequality they face, or conversely how this may lead to a heightened privileged status; and the consideration of this in their specific safeguarding needs
- Integrates safeguarding measures that addresses protection risks for individuals, with whom we work that stem from issues relating to gender and other identity bias and discrimination and creates safe spaces where it is safe to challenge and address inequality, power and bias.
- Requires us to reflect on our status as a prominent INGO and acknowledge the power imbalance this causes within the organisation (where within the organisation power lies, who typically are the “dominant”³ and “subordinate”⁴ groups and how this impacts on decisions we take on safeguarding), as well as between the organisation and the wider society
- Develops our capacity to analyse how individuals can be at risk of harm and abuse as a result of our work because of their particular identity (gender, sexual orientation, tribe, race, colour, disability etc.);
- Supports the empowerment and fosters the inclusion of individuals in all their diversity, particularly in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and ultimately their increased safety and protection

“Harm” is any detrimental effect on a person’s (child’s or adult’s) physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by Abuse or Exploitation whether intended or unintended.

“Intersectional” Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person’s social and political identities (e.g., gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, etc.) combines to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality identifies advantages and disadvantages that are felt by people due to a combination of factors.

“Investigation” a process designed to gather information in order to determine whether wrongdoing occurred and, if so, the persons responsible.

² A working definition developed by PII Child and Youth Safeguarding Unit

³ Those with the most power, greatest privileges and access to and control over resources

⁴ Those with less power and authority, limited access to or control over resources

PII Policy Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA).

“National Organisation” or **“NO”** refers to a legal entity that has signed a Members’ Agreement and License Agreement with PII.

“Online Child Abuse” Online Child Sexual Abuse and online Child Sexual Exploitation involves the use of information and communication technology as a means to sexually abuse and/or sexually exploit children.

Online Child Abuse includes:

- Sexual Abuse material or images
- use of children for sexual performance online or in imagery
- any sexualised conversation with a child
- online grooming coercion or using threats
- sharing inappropriate content with a child

Child Sexual Abuse material is defined as any representation, by whatever means of a child used for real or simulated sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for sexual purposes. It also includes engaging in the production of, viewing, downloading and/or distribution of any such material (whether via the internet or not) and includes, pseudo photographs, comics, drawings, and cartoons.

“Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” is when one person manipulates another person to get them to do something sexual — it’s an ongoing cycle of emotional and psychological Abuse. This can include things such as forcing or blackmailing someone into sending sexual photos/videos of themselves online or to perform sexual acts over webcam. Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse can occur whether communication is between an adult and a child or between two adults.

“Programme Participant”

Direct Programme Participants are the people who are the target of and who we know will be immediately affected by one or more project outputs; irrespective of whether these are delivered directly by Plan International or by partners or organisations who are acting on behalf of Plan International.

- Direct programme participants are individuals who receive materials, equipment; interventions such as training, awareness raising, mentoring or other personal support.
- Direct programme participants may be a single member of a household (for example a mother participating in training on nutrition); or it may be all members in the household (for example, parents enrolled in nutrition programmes for improved family nutrition and health).

Indirect Programme Participants are the people who are not the direct target of the project, but who we have good reason to expect will derive secondary benefits from the project outputs. These include individuals who:

- Benefit from the increased resources or capacities of a direct programme participant of the project. (For example: The children of the parents who received training in hygiene or parenting; or the family members who also benefit from the increased household income through the person who participated in savings groups. Benefit from interventions that are aimed at improving the conditions for a community as a whole rather than the individual persons or households. (For example: The people who live in the catchment area of the health clinic, school or community water services that has been improved by the project).

Programme participants can be of any age and include young people who we engage with through our programming and influencing interventions.

NB: The wider public who might be reached through awareness raising in public media or who might eventually benefit from changes in legislation or policy are not considered part of either direct or indirect programme participants. If counts for specific advocacy projects are required, this should be done by a different, more appropriate method.

“Safeguarding” is the responsibilities, preventative, responsive and referral measures that we undertake to protect children and young people, ensuring that no child or young person is subject to any form of harm as a result of their association with the organisation. This includes, ensuring that their contact with us and those Associated with us and/or their participation in our activities interventions and operations is safe and where there are concerns over a child or young person’s welfare or where a child or young person has been subject to violence, appropriate and timely actions are taken to address this and incidents are analysed so as to ensure continued learning for Plan International Entities.

“Sexual Abuse” The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It covers sexual offences including but not limited to: attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual

kissing and touching). All sexual activity with someone under the age of consent⁵ is considered to be Sexual Abuse.

“Sexual Exploitation” Any actual or attempted Abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from Sexual Exploitation of another.

“Sexual Harassment” A person sexually harasses another person if the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or engages in other unwelcome conduct 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.

Sexual Harassment can take various forms. It can be obvious or indirect, physical or verbal, repeated or one-off and perpetrated by any person of any gender towards any person of any gender. Sexual Harassment can be perpetrated against programme participants, community members, citizens, as well as staff and personnel.

“Sexual Violence Against a Child” the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of a child including:

- a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful or psychologically harmful sexual activity;
- b) The use of children in commercial sexual Exploitation;
- c) The use of children in audio or visual images of child sexual abuse or for sexual performances
- d) Exploitation for/in prostitution, sexual slavery, Sexual Exploitation in travel and tourism, trafficking (within and between countries) and sale of children for sexual purposes and forced marriage. Many children experience sexual victimization which is not accompanied by physical force or restraint but which is nonetheless psychologically intrusive, exploitive and traumatic.

“Staff” refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any Plan International Entity as well as individuals paid by or through a Plan International Entity but located in another entity.

“Stakeholder” is any person, organization, social group, or society at large that has a stake in our work, this can include our programme participant’s communities, governments and donors

“Trafficking” a process of enslaving people, coercing them into a situation with no way out, and exploiting them. People can be trafficked for many different forms of Exploitation such as forced transactional sex, forced labour, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, and forced marriage, and forced organ removal.

“Violence” against a child, young person or adult includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or Abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional ill-treatment or psychological violence, Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other Exploitation of a child or young person. Acts of violence can also take place online through, for example, the web, social media or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent violence against a child or young person. Violence consists of anything which individuals, groups, institutions or organisations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or young person’s wellbeing, dignity and survival and development.

“Victim/Survivor” a person who has experienced Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, or harassment. The terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ can be used interchangeably. ‘Victim’ is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors. ‘Survivor’ is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors because it implies resiliency. We use both terms as part of our survivor-centred approach and strive to allow those affected by Sexual Abuse and Exploitation to choose the term they prefer. A victim/survivor could be a programme participant or a staff member, Associate or visitor.

“Visitor” refers to a range of persons who are visiting our offices or programmes and may come into contact with children and Young People through a Plan International Entity, including journalists, media, researchers, visiting sponsors and celebrities.

“Workplace Safeguarding” refers to the responsibilities, preventative, responsive and referral measures that we undertake to protect our staff, Associates and Visitors from harm as a result of their work or association with the organisation.

“Young Person/People” or **“Youth”** in line with United Nations definitions, include individuals – young women, young men, and young persons of other gender identities - aged 15 years to 24 years old. This group spans the categories of ‘children’, ‘adolescents’ and ‘adults’ but regards Young People as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.

⁵ Refers to age of consent requirements specified for sexual activity in the law of the host country or the age of consent under UK legislation, whichever sets the greatest age.

APPENDIX 2: SHEA REPORT CHAIN

Allegations of SHEA of a child or programme participant will be dealt with in accordance with the 'Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People; Say Yes! To Keeping Children and Young People Safe and Protected'

Workplace allegations of SHEA, internal to PII, will be dealt with in accordance with the 'PII Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy' and our 'Global Policy on Values, Conduct and Whistleblowing'.

