



Market in Bangui, July 2018

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Independent Panel Review of the UNICEF Response to PSEA

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Informal briefing to the UNICEF Executive
Board

PURPOSE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Terms of Reference for Independent Panel included:

- Assessment of UNICEF systems and response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
- Looking at UN system-wide and IASC evolution of policies, mechanisms and responses to Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
- Organisational culture

CONTEXT OF REVIEW

- Rising concerns and cases of SEA involving peacekeepers, development workers and others engaged in providing assistance to vulnerable groups.
- Impact and legacy of Central African Republic (CAR) report in 2015
- *#MeToo* movement
- Links of SEA to wider issues of harassment and abuse of power in workplaces

REVIEW METHODS

- **Document review:** Over 30 folders of information, more gathered at country level. UNICEF, UN offices, IASC, SG reports, evaluations, reports, online sources.
- **Country visits:** Lebanon, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Kenya; Desk study of Iraq.
- **Interviews:** Panel member and consultant undertook range of interviews to supplement earlier work. Over 125 people were interviewed. UNICEF leadership and staff, other UN entities – IASC members; civil society representatives.

REVIEW MANAGEMENT

- Independent Panel of Experts with professional public credibility was established* .
- The panel was requested to give an impartial report that focused on accountability and utility.
- UNEG norms and standards were adhered to through out the evaluation management process.
- Access was given to the Independent Panel to all documents including confidential documents.
- Transparency: The Review Report was made public on completion as per the Evaluation Policy of UNICEF.

** The Independent Panel Members were Kathleen Cravero, Yasmin Sooka and Susanne Frueh. They were supported by Eleanor O’Gorman*

CORE APPROACH

- Report set out analysis across 4 pillars of action on PSEA adopted from the IASC Minimum Operating Standards (MOS); Identifies 32 Action Points and 10 Key Messages.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR PSEA



PREVENTION – Key Findings (1)

- Need to move beyond fragmented compliance measures to:
 - Build a more systemic approach to preventing SEA
 - Active promotion of deterrence
- Organizational culture needs long-term perspective with ongoing measures – promoting a ‘speak out’ culture.

PREVENTION – Key Findings (2)

- ‘The transfer of money to implementing partners should not transfer the risks of SEA’.
- PSEA not yet embedded in risk management at HQ and field.

MANAGEMENT & COORDINATION OF PSEA

– Key findings (1)

- IASC PSEA Minimum Operational Standards of 2012 need to be updated
 - Can function as system-wide accountability and benchmarking framework if stronger
- Information overload and strategic deficit – too many papers!
 - Signals lack of coherent whole of organization strategy
 - Need for support on operational implementation

MANAGEMENT & COORDINATION OF PSEA

– Key Findings (2)

- Need to establish:
 - Whole of organization approach – strategy and action plan
 - Upgraded leadership structure – D1/D2 level reporting to ED with team/supporting positions.
 - Sustained resources
- Need for UN Coherence:
 - help system work better together on PSEA

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – Key Findings (1)

- **Paradigm shift** needed in treating communities and victims as rights-holders and not ‘beneficiaries’.
- Need for **fuller engagement with communities** from earlier on for prevention
 - Also need to consider such prevention engagement beyond humanitarian settings only.
- Community Based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCMs) are necessary in high-risk countries – need fuller testing and rollout.
- CBCMs must be viewed as only one element of establishing One UN reporting system on SEA at country level in all settings.

RESPONSE – Key Findings (1)

- Chronic under-reporting is a systemic concern and stumbling block to accountability and prevention of SEA.
- Too many and at times confusing reporting mechanisms.
- The approach, management and outcomes of investigations involving SEA need significant improvement and coherence.
- **Victim Assistance** needs to be urgently reviewed.
 - Clarify support to victims
 - Clarify UNICEF roles, responsibilities and resources as part of system-wide accountability

10 KEY MESSAGES OF THE REVIEW

1. The individuals and communities with which UNICEF works must be viewed as rights-holders rather than beneficiaries. UNICEF is a duty-bearer in relation to these rights.
2. *Ad hoc* fragmented actions across the many levels of UNICEF must be replaced by a clear and compelling whole of organization strategy.
3. PSEA must be seen as a management responsibility rather than the extension of child protection or GBV programmes.

10 KEY MESSAGES OF THE REVIEW

4. The emphasis must move from a maze of policy documents on PSEA to operational reality. UNICEF staff need practical, user-friendly guidance on PSEA. They need to understand their accountability as duty-bearers towards children and the communities in which children live.
5. PSEA must be seen as relevant in all UNICEF operations, not only in humanitarian settings. UNICEF must be pro-active in identifying and managing PSEA risks, not only responding to crisis. The root causes of and risks for SEA must be identified in all contexts, across all programme areas and in every setting that UNICEF works.

10 KEY MESSAGES OF THE REVIEW

6. Implementing partners should be seen as potential allies in PSEA and, as such, given support, guidance and resources to ensure PSEA within their operations. While implementing partners must be held accountable in this regard, UNICEF cannot transfer its own risk and responsibilities to these partners.
7. A culture must be created that rewards speaking up on PSEA, eliminates fear of retribution and inspires confidence that the “system works”.
8. Deterrence contributes to the prevention of SEA and reinforces the presence of accountability. To this end, consequences for SEA need to be communicated and backed up by credible sanctions.

10 KEY MESSAGES OF THE REVIEW

9. UNICEF must embrace its role as lead advocate for children's rights and needs in all system-wide policies, mechanisms and actions on the ground.
10. SEA and preventing it, are not problems for UNICEF alone. They are system-wide issues and thus require system-wide accountability and action. UNICEF cannot and should not allow the rest of the system to abdicate its responsibility for prevention or for victim assistance. It has two key and reinforcing roles: push the system to do more and better to prevent SEA; and ensure that whatever system-wide action is taken has the rights and needs of children at its center.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (1)

1. Continue the persistent tone at the top aiming at culture change at all levels through various means – including ensuring the centrality of accountability in all of UNICEF’s actions on PSEA.
2. Shift the focus on reporting, policy development and guidance materials to prevention and ensuring accountability both at global and country level.
3. Develop a concise, strategic, three-year whole-of-organization strategy, accompanied by a theory of change and an accountability framework.
4. Develop a clear communications approach to PSEA that is adaptable to the country-specific context.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (2)

5. Using a risk-based approach, provide support for full PSEA roll out throughout UNICEF in both humanitarian and development contexts.
6. Put accountability at the center of detection, investigation and sanctions for cases, as well as the treatment of victims as rights-holders at all stages of reporting, investigation, assistance and outcome.
7. Use the chairpersonship of IASC SEA/SHA to promote inter-agency accountability and learning, pooling of resources to maximize in-country impact, rolling out of a rights-based approach to community engagement on PSEA, simplifying and centralizing reporting at the country level to a single focal point responsible to the SRSG/RC/HC who in turn should be held accountable for ensuring sustainable PSEA systems.

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Thank You

