

## **60. AwazCDS-PAKISTAN'S PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA) POLICY**

### **60.1. Our values and principles**

This policy is concerned with the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) of adults (anyone over the age of 18). This includes direct or indirect beneficiaries of our programming, adults in the wider communities in which we work and those who come into contact with AwazCDS-Pakistan or our representatives.

**AwazCDS-Pak has a “Zero Tolerance” approach to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** and does not allow any employee, partner, supplier, vendor, volunteer or any individual engaged by AwazCDS-Pakistan to engage in any form of sexual abuse or exploitation against vulnerable or other adults associated with its work. All adults have the equal right to protection regardless of any personal characteristic, including their age, gender, ability, culture, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity. This policy applies to all persons working for us or on our behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels, directors, officers, community workers, partners, volunteers, interns, contractors, external consultants, third-party representatives etc. It applies during or outside of working hours, every day of the year.

### **60.2. What is Sexual Exploitation and Abuse?**

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse refers to all forms of inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Exchanging money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior;
2. Sexual activity with commercial sex workers and
3. Use of a child or adult to procure sex for others.

#### **60.2.1. Definitions of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:**

##### **a) Sexual Abuse**

The threatened or actual physical intrusion of a sexual or sexualized nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions, sexual assault and rape. It may also include threatened or actual nonphysical intrusion (unwanted and/or uninvited exposure to pornography, texts, images, and so on, the sharing of images, texts and so on, demands for sexualized photographs etc.).

##### **b) Sexual Exploitation**

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, trust, or dependency, for sexual or sexualized purposes. This includes the offer or promise of monetary, social, political benefits as an incentive or form of coercion.

##### **c) Sexual favors**

Any sexual or sexualized acts, in exchange for something such as money, goods, services, opportunities and so on. Also includes demands for inappropriate photographs, filming, and exposure to pornography and so on.

#### **60.2.2. Zero Tolerance**

At AwazCDS-Pak, we have a culture of zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and mistreatment, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.

This means that every single concern is fully responded to and where necessary prompt action (including conducting an investigation and taking disciplinary action, if applicable) is taken.

It means that we will hold our people to account against the same standards and subject them to the same processes, as everyone else regardless of their position or reputation within the organization.

Sexual exploitation and abuse are a violation of fundamental human rights. It can also be a criminal act.

AwazCDS-Pak is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure the exploitation and abuse of adults is not taking place anywhere in our own work/ business.

AwazCDS-Pak is committed to ensuring there is transparency in our own work/ business and in our approach to preventing and responding to any safeguarding violations against adults throughout our supply chains, and relationship with third parties.

In addition, we are committed to ensuring our approach is consistent to comply with all national applicable laws, statutes, regulations and codes from time to time in force,

including:

1. All relevant national laws related to protection from sexual abuse, violence and harm, and those outlining measures for reporting known or alleged cases of abuse;
2. UN Secretary General's Bulletin: Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Where the guidance in this policy conflicts with any applicable laws or regulations, the higher standard must be observed at all times.

#### **60.3. Our approach to preventing the abuse and exploitation of adults**

AwazCDS-Pak is committed to preventing the sexual exploitation and abuse of adults, including through the following means:

**60.3. 1. Awareness:** Ensuring that all staff, representatives and third parties connected to AwazCDS-Pak are aware of the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them to protect adults from any form of sexual abuse and exploitation in their private and working lives.

**60.3. 2. Prevention:** Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and those who work with AwazCDS-Pak minimize the risks of any form of sexual exploitation and abuse, including but by no means limited to conducting relevant vetting and background checks of staff as part of their recruitment process.

**60.3. 3. Reporting:** Ensuring that all staff and those who work with AwazCDS-Pak are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse of adults in vulnerable groups/ populations where we work.

**60.3. 4.Responding:** Ensuring that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure the safety and well-being of the person being sexually exploited or abused.

**60.3. 5.To help you identify SEA incidents the following are examples of prohibited behavior:**

- a. Engaging in relationships, which could be an abuse of trust, are abusive and/or exploitative.
- b. Your employees engaging in commercial sexual exploitation of a person.
- c. Sexual assault.
- d. Forcing sex or someone to have sex with anyone.
- e. Forcing a person to engage in prostitution or production of pornography.
- f. Unwanted touching of a sexual nature.

4. The commitment we expect from you

**AwazCDS-Pak** expects the same high standards from all of our employees, partners, contractors, consultants and all third parties working with or for AwazCDS-Pak, including taking measures to prohibit their staff and representatives from engaging in any sexual exploitation and abuse in their working and person lives.

When any staff working for AwazCDS-Pak suspect or become aware of a safeguarding concern in relation to work for AwazCDS-Pak, they are obliged to: -

1. Act quickly and immediately report suspicions or knowledge of a safeguarding concern or incident to a relevant contact at AwazCDS-Pak (which could include the PSEA Focal Point, the AwazCDS's contact email address).
2. Keep any information confidential between you and the person you report this to.
3. Person will cooperate with AwazCDS-Pak in any investigations of concerns reported and keep AwazCDS-Pak promptly updated on any concerns reported including but not limited to actions taken by you in response.

#### **60.4. Fundamental Elements of the Policy:**

**60.4.1.** Any harmful incident may be reported, highlighted or noticed by any concerned person associated or connected with the organization as defined above

**60.4.2.** AwazCDS-Pakistan requires the concerned person(s) to identify themselves by providing their name, CNIC number and phone number for follow up and support.

**60.4.3.** The concerned person or whistleblower shall be protected from victimization, harassment or disciplinary action as a result of reporting; where the report is made in good faith and is not made maliciously or for other unjustified reasons.

**60.4.4.** Reported matters shall be investigated fully and formally including interviews with all the witnesses and other parties involved. The identity of the concerned person shall be held confidential at all stages by the PSEA Committee.

**60.4.5.** AwazCDS-Pakistan shall provide internal anonymity; it cannot guarantee such a confidentiality will be retained if any external legal actions would follow.

#### **60.5. Reporting Information & Documentation**

a. If the circumstances require, the issue may be reported to Mr. Ishfaq Khan Khalil –PSEA and Safeguarding Focal Point by the victim/ complainant / concerned person personally or via Phone # +92-51-2305233 or 2305234 or email at [cito@awazcds.org.pk](mailto:cito@awazcds.org.pk) or by post letter marked as “Attention: Mr. Ishfaq Ahmed Khan, PSEA & Safeguarding Focal Point, AwazCDS-Pakistan, 1<sup>st</sup> floor , Flat #3 &4, Akbari Plaza E11/1 Islamabad”. Or through online Complaint Response Mechanism at [www.awazcds.org.pk](http://www.awazcds.org.pk)

b. In case the victim/ complainant / concerned person requires to submit his /her complaint or instance against higher management of the organization or not comfortable to report to Mr. Ishfaq Ahmed Khan, PSEA and Safeguarding Focal Point he/she may complain to Ms. Sofia Noreen, Board Member, AwazCDS-Pakistan at [sofia.noreen@gmail.com](mailto:sofia.noreen@gmail.com) She will initiate the process of the investigation / redressal immediately as per procedure.

c. The PSEA and Safeguarding Focal Person shall maintain a Log Incident Register for immediate registration of incident and then initiate the further investigation or redressal process with the support of PSEA Committee members.

#### **60.6. Safeguarding Committee and its Role**

The Safeguarding Committee shall comprise of;

- One member from the senior management of the organization- preferably female.
- Head of / Director/ Manager HR and;
- PSEA Focal Point

**60.6. 1.** In cases, where needed, a Board Member can be requested to be part of the committee or for the oversight of the process and redressal. The Head of / Director /HR will be secretary of all meetings, and will be kept in the loop throughout the proceedings of the case or complaint.

**60.6. 2.** The PSEA Focal Point will be responsible for maintaining the record and documentation of all such proceedings. If any one of the members of the Safeguarding Committee is a victim or complainant or accused, then he or she will be replaced on the Committee for that case by the Management or Board.

**60.6. 3.** After conducting investigations, if the Committee feels that the issue raised by the concerned person/ whistleblower is critical to the operations of AwazCDS-Pakistan and threatens to have pervasive negative implications, the Committee will escalate the matter to the CEO and Board of Directors for further deliberation.

**60.6. 4.** The Board members will take up the case as per the policies and procedures of the organizations or as per the law of land.

**60.6. 5.** The members of the Committee shall also review the Risk Register of the organization on periodic basis to pre-empt the prospective harms and suggest mitigation. The risk register may also share the learning from the past instances that can be inculcated in the future plans.

**60.6. 6.** The PSEA policy shall be reviewed at least after every two years during the annual review and planning meeting of the organization. The recommendations shall be shared with Board members for improvements and amendments accordingly.

**60.6. 7.** The focal point and members of the PSEA Committee shall be provided with specialized trainings at the time of induction and later, on periodic basis to equip them with modern day's harmful practices to pre-empt ensure protection and do no harm at all levels.

**60.6. 8.** All the staff / board members shall be given orientation on safeguarding policy and SOPs at the time of induction.

**60.6. 9.** In case of engagement with children below the age of 18 consent of their parents/ guardian/custodian shall be attained.

**60.6. 10.** Photographs and videography of all the organizational events and their further use at all publications / social media / electronic media / print media shall be made with the consent of participants in order to safeguard their privacy and identity.