

<h2>Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy</h2>	Effective date	August 2018
	Next review date	August 2020
	Sponsor	HR Manager
	Board committee	Board
<b>Level / Class</b>  <b>Corporate      Organisation</b>	Approval / authorisation	

### 1. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision Number	Change(s)	Reference Section(s)

### 2. PURPOSE

Fundamental to the operation of AVI is respect for the dignity and basic human rights of people within Australia and throughout the world. Every person who represents AVI is expected to reflect these values in their professional conduct, regardless of who they are dealing with, or where they are working.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is a violation of basic human rights. AVI aims to provide a safe and trusted environment that safeguards everyone from SEA including beneficiary communities, workers, program participants and partner organisations.

AVI is committed to safeguarding the people it helps and who it works alongside. We recognise that the nature of AVI's work places our workers and program participants in positions of authority and trust in relation to the communities we work with, especially vulnerable adults and children. AVI workers and program participants have an obligation to uphold high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times and must not abuse this position in order to exploit or abuse another person.

AVI will actively prevent and respond to SEA and maintain an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding against SEA so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and appropriately.

### 3. SCOPE / PERSONS AFFECTED

The following must comply with this Policy in the course of their work and when representing AVI:

- AVI workers
- All program participants
- All accompanying adult dependents

All of the aforementioned must comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this AVI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy.

Appropriate consultation (tick for 'yes', otherwise leave blank)

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Worker:** employees (Australia and overseas), consultants, contractors, office volunteers, interns, the AVI Board, or anyone engaged to undertake work for this organisation.

**Program Participant:** defined as any person engaged to undertake an assignment, volunteer or otherwise, on an international or domestic program managed by AVI.

**Accompanying adult dependent:** defined as any person over the age of 18 supported by AVI to accompany a person undertaking an assignment, volunteer or otherwise, on an international or domestic program managed by AVI.

**Program beneficiaries:** any person who, either directly or by association, derives a benefit from an AVI or AVI affiliated program. Examples include, but are not limited to; Partner Organisation employees and community members who directly receive a service or engage with a program participant in the course of the participant's work with a Partner Organisation.

**Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)** occurs against a child or an adult and can occur between people of the same or different genders. It includes situations such as:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Sexual harassment;
- Child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- Women and men sexually exploited through sex work;
- Possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting sexually exploitative images of adults and children; and
- Prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA).

**Sexual Exploitation** - any actual or attempted abuse of a 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.<sup>1</sup>

**Sexual Abuse** - the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Sexual Harassment** - includes all conduct of a sexual or gender-determined nature at the workplace or connected to the workplace that is intended to violate the dignity of a person, or which has this effect.

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<sup>1</sup> The definitions for both Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse are contained in the United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin, "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" ST/SGB/2003/13 (9 October 2003) [hereinafter Secretary-General's Bulletin on SEA (2003)].

In this policy, sexual harassment is understood as behaviour that is unwanted in the eyes of the persons directly or indirectly affected.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical approaches or physical contact of a sexual nature, or sexual assault
- Gestures and other nonverbal communication with sexual undertones
- Comments of a sexual nature about individuals and/or their body, conduct, sex life or sexual identity
- Sexually discriminatory language and humiliating remarks, including sexually explicit jokes;
- Requests to perform sexual activities
- Showing or displaying pornographic or sexist images
- Repetitive questions or prying into an individual's relationship status or details of their relationship
- Invitations to inappropriate locations outside the workplace for work-related meetings
- Offers to, or the sending of gifts that are unwelcome, out of context or embarrassing to an individual
- suggestive logistics or questions around work trips, including offers to share hotel rooms and unwelcome social invitations
- Sexually motivated stalking. <sup>2</sup>

**Child Sexual Abuse** - the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexually abusive behaviours can include fondling genitals; masturbation; oral sex; vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object; fondling breasts; voyeurism; exhibitionism; and exposing the child to, or involving the child in, pornography (AVI Child Protection Policy).

**Child Exploitation** - one or more of the following:

- Committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child
- Possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material
- Committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming
- Using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage<sup>3</sup>

**Online Child Sexual Exploitation** (or child pornography) - in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'child pornography' means 'any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.

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<sup>2</sup> GIZ policy banning sexual harassment at the workplace

<sup>3</sup> DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017

**Child** – any person under the age of eighteen (18) years as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child irrespective of local country definitions of when a child reaches adulthood.

**Vulnerable adults** - those aged over 18 years and who identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves/ protect themselves from harm or exploitation; or who, due to their gender, mental or physical health, disability, ethnicity, religious identity, sexual orientation, economic or social status, or as a result of disasters and conflicts, are deemed to be at risk.

**Survivor** - A person who has SEA perpetrated against him/her or an attempt to perpetrate SEA against him/her.

## 5. PRINCIPLES

AVI's commitment to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse is informed by the following principles:

- **Child rights and women's rights as core values within AVI:** AVI upholds the rights articulated in the International Bill of Human Rights, The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and promotes the right of adults and children to be protected from all forms of violence including SEA.
- **Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children:** Issues of SEA are fundamentally about abuses of power. Situations of poverty, vulnerability and discrimination as well as power inequities between genders, between aid workers/volunteers and beneficiary communities, and within organisations, create unequal power dynamics resulting in environments where SEA can exist. AVI acknowledges the impact of SEA on an individual's health and wellbeing, and in particular that negative physical, mental health and social outcomes that are likely to be compounded when perpetrated by a person in authority.
- **Expected behaviours of those representing AVI:** Given differing local contexts, AVI workers and program participants may be faced with a range of unfamiliar social, cultural, financial or personal settings when working or volunteering overseas. Communities trust that the people representing AVI will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and not engage in behaviour contrary to the safety or wellbeing of the children and adults they come into contact with.
- **Zero tolerance of SEA:** Behaviour by AVI workers or program participants that results in the sexual exploitation or abuse of a child or adult, helps facilitate SEA or where allegations of SEA are ignored by AVI or partner organisation personnel, will not be tolerated and AVI will immediately respond and take seriously any concerns raised.
- **Take action to prevent SEA:** AVI aims to prevent SEA through implementation of this Policy, communication, training and working collaboratively with all personnel, country offices and partner organisations to safeguard everyone against SEA.

## 6. POLICY

The following list of expected behaviours applies to all of AVI workers, AVI program participants and Australian Volunteers Program (AVP) or other program approved adult dependents, in both their personal and professional lives. The aforementioned must, at all times:

- maintain a duty to act at all times in a manner which upholds the values and reputation of AVI
- Undertake to create and maintain a safe and trusted environment that promotes the implementation of this Policy and safeguards everyone from SEA.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local laws of the country to which he or she is placed, or in which he or she is travelling.
- Be aware that sexual behaviour is an area of particular sensitivity, where conduct may more easily be seen as offensive or be misinterpreted.
- Ensure personal conduct towards a co-worker is not exploitative or such that it reasonably leads to a perception of exploitation.
- Read and agree to abide by the expected behaviours outlined in the relevant code of conduct.
- Immediately report to AVI any concern, suspicion or allegation of SEA or breach of the AVI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy. Reporting procedures are outlined in section 6.4 below.

In addition, AVI workers must adhere to the following expected behaviours:

- AVI workers must not engage in sexual relationships with program participants, approved adult dependents, or AVI program beneficiaries as these relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and there is the potential for abuse of power. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of AVI and its programs.
- Workers must immediately inform their direct manager if they become engaged in a personal relationship which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where real or perceived unequal power dynamics exist. **Workers who are unsure if their relationships falls into this category should discuss the situation with their line manager and/or a member of the Human Resources team.**

Program participants and accompanying adult dependents must adhere to the following expected behaviours:

- Program participants/adult dependents should exercise caution when engaging in sexual relationships with AVI program beneficiaries or other adult community members as these relationships may be based on inherently unequal power dynamics and there is the potential for abuse of power. As such, program participants should be mindful of the unique challenges and perceptions associated with such relationships and are encouraged to seek counsel from an AVI Program Manager or Regional Director before entering into a relationship of this nature.
- Program participants must immediately inform their Program Manager or Regional Director if they become engaged in a personal relationship which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where real or perceived unequal power dynamics exist. **Participants and dependents who are unsure if their relationship falls into this category should discuss the situation with their Program Manager or Regional Director.**

It is strictly prohibited for AVI workers, program participants and AVP approved adult dependents to:

- Sexually exploit or abuse or sexually harass a child or adult.
- Use their position of trust and authority to request any service or sexual favour from beneficiaries of AVI programs, adults, children or others in the communities in which AVI works, in return for protection or assistance, or coerce a person to engage in sexual intercourse or any sexual activity.

- Exchange or withhold from beneficiaries of AVI programs - adults, children or others in the communities in which AVI works - money, food, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex or sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.
- Have sex with sex workers when working or volunteering overseas, even when it is legal in the country.
- Use, AVI or partner organisation facilities, personnel or resources for the purpose of arranging or facilitating access to sex workers by any person, including visitors to AVI offices or programs.
- Engage in sexual activity with a child under any circumstance. Even in a country where the age of majority or the age of consent is lower than 18 years, AVI workers, program participants and AVP approved adult dependents are forbidden to have sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 years. A mistaken belief that the child is over 18 is no defence.
- Use computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or other technology inappropriately, or to exploit or harass children, or access or disseminate child exploitative material through any medium, including social media
- Procure sex for others, or use a third party to do so.

## **6.1 Breach of Policy**

Sexual exploitation and abuse by AVI workers, program participants and AVP approved adult dependents constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment or volunteer assignment.

Disciplinary actions/possible outcomes for breach of the AVI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy:

- Referral to local law enforcement authorities (as per national and any mandatory reporting laws), where appropriate
- Referral to Australian Federal Police, where appropriate
- AVI internal investigation
- Suspension pending investigation
- Performance management
- Formal warning and monitoring
- Termination of employment for workers or assignment for program participants.

## **6.2 Responsibilities to prevent and respond to SEA**

All AVI workers are responsible for championing good practice and maintaining an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding against SEA.

Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain an environment that facilitates implementation of this Policy and which prevents SEA. They must ensure that AVI workers and program participants understand and comply with this Policy.

Managers must create a safe environment at AVI for anyone to come forward and raise allegations or concerns of SEA and take action to immediately respond to any reports.

### 6.3 Recruitment and Performance Management

AVI will apply robust recruitment and screening procedures for all AVI workers, program participants and AVP approved adult dependents to reduce the risk of engaging a person with a background of unacceptable risks to children or adults, particularly vulnerable children and adults.

These procedures include:

- Verbal referee checks from an applicant's last place of employment/volunteer/program placement including when working in overseas locations and will include a question regarding any concerns of sexual misconduct.
- HR records to include performance or conduct issues regarding concerns or allegations of SEA.
- All employment/assignment contracts must contain provisions for potential disciplinary action including termination of employment/assignment following breach of this policy.

### 6.4 Reporting and Investigation

#### *Reporting Procedures*

AVI provides a safe, supportive and secure environment to report SEA. AVI will take all concerns seriously and respond immediately. All reports of SEA will be recorded, regardless of whether substantiated or full investigation required. The principles of natural justice will apply to all investigations.

AVI workers, program participants and accompanying adult dependents must immediately report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of SEA or breach of the AVI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy. A report should be made to one of the following people as applicable:

*Program participants and accompanying adult dependents may report a concern regarding sexual exploitation and abuse to any of the following people:*

- The relevant Regional Director or Program Manager: if he/she feels comfortable doing so, and if the Director/Manager is not directly or indirectly implicated in the alleged report
- AVP Operations Manager
- AVI Risk and Security Staff
- AVI Executive Manager International Services

*AVI Workers may report a concern regarding sexual exploitation and abuse to any of the following people:*

- Their Line Manager: if the worker feels comfortable doing so, and if he/she is not directly or indirectly implicated in the alleged report
- The Chief Executive Officer
- A member of the Human Resources team
- A member of the AVI Organisational Leadership Team (OLT)

*Anyone wishing to make a report anonymously can do so using the Whispli reporting tool. Access to reporting is via this link: <https://app.whispli.com/CPandSEAreportingformAVI>*

Any person reporting a case of SEA, in good faith, or any person who has cooperated with an investigation into a report of SEA, will be protected by this Policy. Malicious reporting of SEA with the intention of harming another person's integrity or reputation amounts to misconduct and is subject to disciplinary action. This is distinct from reports made in good faith based on the judgment and information available at the time of the report, which may not be confirmed by an investigation.

### *Investigations*

Investigations of SEA will be carried out in a manner that is timely, fair, objective and as far as is practicable, confidential. This includes the use of appropriate interviewing practice with complainants and witnesses. All information and documented evidence will be held securely and in the strictest confidence as far as is appropriate. The name of the complainant will not be revealed to the person(s) potentially implicated in the allegation or to any other person unless the individual personally authorises the disclosure of their identity. This may become a requirement in subsequent investigative processes.

Sensitive information related to reports of SEA whether involving AVI workers, program participants, accompanying adult dependents or others in the communities in which AVI works shall be shared only with Australian or local law enforcement authorities, when a notification to police or appropriate authorities must be made on a 'need to know' basis.

## **6.5 Survivor support and assistance**

AVI will adopt a survivor-centred approach in preventing and responding to SEA. AVI will ensure that all responses are developed in a manner that balances respect for due process with a survivor-centred approach in which the survivor's wishes, safety and wellbeing remain a priority in all matters and procedures. Furthermore, all actions taken should be guided by respect for choices, wishes, rights and dignity of the survivor<sup>4</sup>.

AVI will ensure survivors of SEA are offered support and assistance such as referral to safe health/medical, psychosocial and legal/justice response where appropriate and where required to specialised children's or women's services.

Children have the right to participate in decisions that will affect them. If a decision is taken on behalf of a child, the best interests of the child shall be the overriding guide. Referrals should be done in consultation with child focused agencies specialising in the special needs of child survivors of sexual abuse, and who are familiar with local procedures relating to the protection of children.<sup>5</sup>

Survivors will be provided with information on the progression of an investigation and final outcomes.

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<sup>4</sup> IASC Statement on PSEA (2015)

<sup>5</sup> Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in CBCMs (2016)



## 6.6 Partner Organisations

AVI will work with Partner Organisations in the prevention of SEA and Partner Organisations will be advised of avenues available to report concerns regarding SEA.

## 7. RELATED POLICIES

- AVI Staff Code of Conduct
- EEO, Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Policy
- Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct 2018
- AVP Australian Volunteer Code of Conduct
- The Australian Volunteers Guidebook
- Program Operations Manuals
- AVI Whistleblower Protection Policy 2017
- Social Media Policy for AVI Staff 2016

## 8. RELEVANT LAWS AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- International Bill of Human Rights
- The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UNSC Resolution 1325: Women, peace and security (WPS)
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017
- ACFID Code of Conduct 2017
- Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995 - It is a crime for Australian citizens, permanent residents or bodies corporate to engage in, facilitate or benefit from sexual activity with children (under 16 years of age) while overseas. These offences carry penalties of up to 25 years imprisonment for individuals and up to \$500,000 in fines for companies (extraterritorial legislation).

## 9. REFERENCES

- Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse – Adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 28 January 2016  
<http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/terminologyguidelines.pdf>
- IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse<sup>6</sup>  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-psea-inter-agency-cooperation-community-based>
- DFAT Code of Conduct for Overseas Service  
<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/dfat-code-of-conduct-for-overseas-service.aspx>

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<sup>6</sup> See Report of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises of 13 June 2002, Plan of Action, Section I.A.

