Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist

Responding to Sexual Violence in in Humanitarian and Development Settings

Report the Abuse

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Author

Megan Nobert, Founder and Director, Report the Abuse

Researchers

Alessandra Carminati
Anja Feller-Wiersing
Lovisa Ericson
Michelle Grover
Neha Bhat

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Summary

Sexual violence against and within the humanitarian and development community is only an emergent problem in the sense that it is finally beginning to be openly discussed. These initial discussions are a starting point, but with a relatively small percentage of humanitarian and development organisations having prevention strategies, policies or procedures on the topic, it is clear that this *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist* is an essential and timely contribution to the discourse.

Sexual violence – which ranges from harassment to unwanted touching to rape - in humanitarian and development workplaces can have a significant impact on survivors, office relationships, quality of programming and interactions with the local population. It is a problem with far reaching consequences and, with 56% of reported perpetrators being either expatriate or national colleagues,[1] it must be addressed by organisations quickly and effectively.

Notably, sexual violence within the humanitarian workplace is not a problem that is without solutions. This *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist* sets out a series of actions that can and should be taken by humanitarian and development organisations – from the United Nations (UN), to International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), to Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and all organisations ranging in between.

Though divided into the three categories – prevention, policy and procedure – all aspects of the Checklist should be considered holistically in the greater context of humanitarian and development work. Running prevention trainings without having

[1] 25% were noted as being members of the local community, and a further 19% were reported as being unknown perpetrators.

reporting procedures in place only partially addresses one problem superficially. Creating reporting procedures without appropriate survivor-centred follow-up only serves to drive the wedge between humanitarian and development organisations and their employees experiencing acts of sexual violence even further. These initiatives must happen in concert to be fully effective.

According to the data collected by Report the Abuse, as of the publication of this report, 47% of survivors of sexual violence did not file a complaint with their organisations. Of those who did, only 17% felt that the complaint was handled appropriately. The data alone clearly demonstrates the need to improve how sexual violence in humanitarian and development organisations is addressed. We believe that this *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist* will begin to fill the gap in addressing the issue.

Introduction

Sexual violence[2] within and against the humanitarian and development community is a newly emerging issue in the sense that it is a problem with a long history that is only now beginning to be discussed on a larger scale. According to the data collected by Report the Abuse, as of the time of publication of this report, 85% of respondents stated that they knew someone in the industry who had experienced an act of sexual violence, with a further 66% having personally experienced such an act.

In late 2015, the issue was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly:

> On the initiative of [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights] and the International Organization for Migration, on 11 December 2015, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals endorsed a statement on sexual exploitation and abuse that focuses on humanitarian personnel and includes specific commitments in three areas: (a) full implementation of minimum operating security standards by the second quarter of 2016; (b) reinforcement of the responsibilities on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse for the Humanitarian Coordinator role; and (c) strengthening investigation and protection responses to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.[3]

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[2] The World Health Organisation's 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health* defines sexual violence as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work."
World Health Organization. *World report on violence and health*, 2002, Chapter 6, pp. 149.

[3] United Nations General Assembly, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/729, 16 February 2016, para. 90.

Report the Abuse was founded specifically to address this problem via a two-fold strategy:

1. Create a safe place for humanitarian and development workers who experience sexual violence during the course of their work ; and
2. Advocate for improved response strategies, policies and procedures regarding sexual violence in the workplaces of humanitarian and development organisations.

This report is the first step to ensuring both prevention and accountability measures are put into place. We hope it is the beginning of what will become a comprehensive set of documents, including training tools, policies and procedures, and resources for survivors.

In order to produce sustainable and transformative change, humanitarian and development organisations will need to ensure that their organisational policies and procedures regarding all forms of sexual violence experienced by staff, consultants, contractors, interns or other types of employees, including sexual harassment, discrimination, violence and exploitation, are implemented and applied across all levels of organisations. Moreover, comprehensive change includes promoting a no-tolerance policy regarding sexual violence in all working environments, including applying whistle-blower protection to survivors and witnesses who report violations of sexual violence policies and procedures within the broader humanitarian and development community. Sustained change will require time, patience and attention to achieve. Looking at how the policies and procedures on sexual violence against employees in the industry are created and applied is therefore a part of such sustained change.

Methodology

This report was produced through a number of different research methods-intended to construct a nuanced picture of the issue of sexual violence against humanitarian and development workers in humanitarian and development settings. By using both qualitative and quantitative means of analysing the issue, a more comprehensive picture could be formed.

First, web-based secondary research was conducted to determine what humanitarian and development organisations are currently utilising in terms of sexual violence policies and procedures. Where such information was not obtainable online, agencies were contacted for further primary information and documentation. In total, 92 organisations – ranging from the UN to INGOs to regional organisations to governmental bodies – were contacted regarding their policies and procedures on sexual violence as they apply to employees. This data was collated and then analysed, and provides one piece of the picture regarding how humanitarian and development organisations are approaching the problem at this time.

Secondly, Report the Abuse's Survey, entitled Sexual Violence in the Humanitarian Community (Survey),[4] has been operational since 19 August 2015 and tracks the nature and type of incidents of sexual violence in the humanitarian and development community. The Survey includes the opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the current state of sexual violence policies and procedures and what might be done to improve the current situation. The data collected so far has also been collated and analysed, and quotations of particular poignancy are highlighted in this document. The Survey provides important first-hand insights into what humanitarian and development workers require from their employers, and has been an excellent

[4] Report the Abuse, The Survey, available at: https://reporttheabuse.org/survey

starting point for the *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist;* ensuring that all work has been survivor-centred.

Finally, research was conducted to identify any best practices on security and risk management, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and/or sexual violence, and human resources policies and procedures. While there was documentation identified on parallel topics, no documents were identified that specifically addressed the topic of sexual violence against humanitarian and development workers.

Taking all of the above research and data into account, common themes and gaps were identified. Upon consultation with Report the Abuse's Board of Directors, created initially for the purpose of ensuring that the proposed guidelines meet industry standards, the *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist* was created as a first step toward ensuring prevention and accountability for humanitarian and development workers subjected to sexual violence while doing their work.

Exploration of current industry policies

Report the Abuse researched 92 different humanitarian and development organisations – ranging from the UN to INGOs to regional organisations to governmental bodies – to determine whether they had prevention strategies, policies or procedures to address the issue of sexual violence within their workplaces.

Where such information was available online, this was directly analysed. When it was not, as was the case for 64% percent of humanitarian and development organisations, said organisations were contacted to request access to their policies and procedures. Organisations were informed that an analysis of their policies and procedures might be published at some stage in the form of the *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist*.

Of the 56 humanitarian and development organisations contacted to gain access to their policies and procedures, there was a 70% response rate, hindered likely by a number of organisations only having a generic contact email available.[5] 7% of the organisations would not allow external access to their policies or procedures and 9% of the organisations do not currently have any policy or procedure on the topic at all.

The information produced below provides a piece of the picture of the current situation facing humanitarian and development workers today who might find themselves survivors of sexual violence. The collection of fractured policies make it clear that providing a framework for preventing sexual violence incidents is vital at this time, and the data from this qualitative research project is collated and assessed by emergent themes below.

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[5] Where personal contacts were known or could be made, the response rate was higher. Of the 30% of organisations that did not respond, a minimum of one follow-up email was sent, with up to four follow-up emails being sent in some cases.

Code of Conduct

Amongst the group of organisations who prioritize the use of a Code of Conduct for their employees, there are several INGO and UN bodies who stand out as a potential golden standard – at least on paper. [6] Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to see these policies in practice or assess how successful they are when implemented.

There were several key pieces that stood out in the Codes of Conduct assessed. One such feature was applying the Codes of Conduct to all working with the organisation, including partner organisations. By setting out in-depth the detrimental effects of abuse and violence, as well as upholding harassment-free workplaces for not only themselves but also any other organisation receiving funding, these organisations are able to establish guidelines for their partners as well as themselves.

Interestingly, some of the Codes of Conduct also made reference to legal investigations and ways for these to be handled, and the opportunity to revoke funding for any organisation found to not be upholding the standards it have set. This would potentially provide a strong incentive for partners to maintain harassment-free workplaces.

In all, 30% of organisations were identified as having a Code of Conduct, though the content of these codes varied drastically, with some mentioning sexual violence only in passing. More work is needed clearly across the board to make Codes of Conduct more robust enforcement mechanisms, yet their existence and relatively common use is encouraging.

Training

17% of organisations mention conducting trainings on sexual exploitation and abuse, though they do not specify whether such trainings consider sexual exploitation and abuse

[6] Note that, for the purposes of this report, a decision was made to not name said organisations. Report the Abuse intends though to work with those identified as having excellent documentation on preventing or responding to incidents of sexual violence, with the aim of publishing their names on our website in the future.

of beneficiaries, employees or both. Without further information it is not possible to make a determination as to the value of any such training.

Trainings on the broader topics of sexual violence and sexual exploitation and abuse are valuable, however, and holding such trainings is certainly a step in the correct direction – even if they do not explicitly address sexual violence in humanitarian and development workplaces.

PSEA Policies

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policies were often cited by organisations as proof that they addressing sexual violence in their workplaces. [7] In fact, 34% of organisations put forth such a policy to show that they are preventing sexual violence in their offices.

[7] PSEA policies refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries by humanitarian and development workers.

While the use of PSEA policies should be applauded, it does not in fact address the full extent of sexual violence in humanitarian and development settings, as it ignores the reality of sexual violence in the workplace. In fact, while a focus on primary prevention that stops violence from happening in the first place is vital, a strategy that ignores secondary and tertiary prevention ignores the needs of survivors whose violence occurred regardless of organisational PSEA policies.

That said, it is again certainly a step in the right direction, and, for organisations with robust PSEA policies, these policies could potentially be extended to address sexual violence in the workplace with minimal additional effort.

Whistleblower Policy

One of the other ways in which humanitarian and development organisations are addressing sexual violence is through the use of whistleblower policies. In fact, 21% of organisations noted that they use a whistleblower policy to address issues of sexual violence and/or sexual exploitation and abuse.

As with training, most organisations do not specify whether such policies were directed at the issue of sexual violence in the workplace or the sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries. Yet, the existence of whistleblower policies is a positive sign, assuming that are properly used and protect those who report.

Harassment and Sexual Violence Policies

Of all of the humanitarian and development agencies contacted, only 12 were identified as having an explicit policy and/or procedure regarding harassment or sexual violence against employees. This is a concerning number and accounts for only 16% of the organisations who either provided their information online or responded to our inquiries for further information.

This is certainly a place to start, and these 12 organisations do appear to have expansive policies and response mechanisms – at least on paper. However, if the vast majority of humanitarian and development agencies do not have such measures in place, it also means that the vast majority of humanitarian and development workers may be without protection and support should they experience sexual violence in the course of their work.

Survey feedback from the humanitarian and development community

The Survey conducted by Report the Abuse was created firstly to provide survivors with a space to speak about their experiences of sexual violence. The feedback has been extraordinary, with several survivors expressing what happened to them for the first time. These personal experiences have largely inspired this report and, with 42% of participants stating that their experience of sexual violence changed the way they worked as humanitarian or development workers, these testimony underscore the survey's importance. It should be further noted that 24% of respondents stated they had experienced more than one act of sexual violence in the course of their work, highlighting the pervasiveness of the issue.

In addition to the information noted above, the Survey also allowed participants to provide an answer to the following question:

> Do you have any suggestions on ways to combat the problem of sexual violence against humanitarians?[8]

The information in this section is based on these answers, as participants – those most affected by prevention and response strategies – provided practical insights on how to combat the problem of sexual violence against humanitarian and development workers.

[8] The Survey, Report the Abuse, available at: http://reporttheabuse.org/survey

Training

Training was the most commonly identified solution in combating the problem of sexual violence within the humanitarian community. This is a key step in ensuring that workers have an understanding of sexual violence and sexual exploitation issues in general, as well as information specifically targeting them in their capacity as humanitarians.

Security briefings and pre-deployment training courses were identified as a means of providing information to humanitarian and development workers on their risk of sexual violence, as well as what can be done to prevent the problem.

Respondents also suggested that all senior staff members and/or managers/leaders should receive training on psychological first aid to better equip them to handle reports of sexual violence. Even having access to a training manual on the topic would go a long way toward ensuring senior staff members and/or managers/leaders are able to interact with the survivor without re-traumatising them.

Participants also suggested trainings on consent to establish what is and is not acceptable behaviour in the office and other working environments.

Alternatively, it was pointed out that there are online courses available through organisations - such as the Centre for Humanitarian Psychology[9] or Interhealth[10] and RedR[11] - that are equipped to provide assessments and in-house training for organisations upon request. Utilisation of resources such as these was suggested for organisations currently lacking the institutional capacity to provide trainings to significant portions of their employees.

Sexual Violence Awareness

The second most common suggestion to combating sexual violence in humanitarian and development settings was increasing awareness.

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[9] Centre for Humanitarian Psychology, available at: http://www.humanitarian-psy.org
[10] Interhealth, available at: https://www.interhealthworldwide.org
[11] RedR, available at: http://www.redr.org.uk

Participants voiced that professionals have to acknowledge a problem exists prior to improving their policies and responses.

Further, it was suggested that the humanitarian and development community must concede that women face more dangers than their male colleagues in this field because of the high prevalence of gendered violence occurring against them.

Organisations must also make it clear – through organisational ethos and trainings –- that there is no culturally appropriate reason for committing acts of sexual violence. A number of the participants stated that they are aware of survivors who have not reported for fear of being accused of not understanding or respecting the local culture (i.e. that they would be blamed for what happened to them). Measures such as those mentioned above might help reduce this fear of retaliation and victim-blaming.

One participant further noted that organisations must emphasise that no survivor asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted, as this will help to foster a community of acceptance and support.

Participants recommended that there be a resource or support group that survivors could access, either within or across organisations. This could be done anonymously and confidentially, where humanitarian and development workers could ask questions and receive advice, speak to someone without having to identify themselves or their organisation, and be able to communicate with other survivors.

Clearer Policies and Procedures

The desire for clearer policies and procedures seemed to stem from a need for greater protection from sexual violence, as well as the provision of care should someone be subjected to such violence.

A number of participants requested that organisations' obligation to provide health care – both physical and emotional – be clearly outlined. Organisations should have protocols in place to ensure that emergency contraceptives, HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and STI medication is made immediately available to survivors, whether this is through an organisation on the ground or through 'rape-kits,' which can be obtained from different health-focused NGOs [12] and kept on hand in the event they are needed.

Medical care also requires that there be treatment available for any physical injuries, preferably at or near the site where the incident occurred, and preferably at a location where forensic evidence can be obtained, should this be the request of the survivor. Alternatively, evacuation plans must be in place to ensure that survivors can be relocated to access such medical care as soon as is possible. More importantly, organisations should include all these options in their policies, so that survivors are given choices and not further disempowered.

There was considerable emphasis placed on emotional or psychological support. Participants expressed that getting timely access to specialist support can make a significant difference in the healing process, and arrangements should already be in place for an organisation to be able to offer such a service, should this be a survivor's wish. Limits should not be placed on the amount of psychosocial support to which a survivor is entitled, as this need can vary between survivors, and participants felt that organisations need to be more sensitive to the fact that recovery from sexual violence can be a long process.

It was also suggested that this psychosocial support should be extended to all individuals affected by an incident of sexual violence, including the focal point [13] for the survivor, as vicarious trauma can be just as damaging as primary trauma.

[12] *Such as* Interhealth, available at: https://www.interhealthworldwide.org

[13] Including, but not limited to, the survivor's main supporter, which could be a friend or colleague – within or outside their organization. Focal point can also refer to a formal role within an organization, such as an individual within human resources or senior management.

It was also suggested by some participants that such psychosocial support should be made mandatory, as it might go toward reducing the stigma of the crime and make survivors feel less 'weak' for accepting mental and emotional support.

The essential element expressed however was that survivors should never have to ask for or seek either medical or psychosocial support – it should be immediately and frequently offered at all stages of the recovery process and/or investigation.

Legal Options

It is clear from the participant's responses that accountability is a concern, and for many survivors accountability requires the pursuit of legal measures to obtain justice for acts of sexual violence.

There are a number of barriers to pursuing justice for sexual violence crimes that occur in both humanitarian and development settings. With this in mind, it was suggested that organisations have prepared outlines or guides that set out the various options available to a survivor in a particular location. This would include, but is not limited to, the practicality and concerns that might come with pursuing such legal actions (for example, whether reporting to the local police would put a survivor in danger).

Obtaining justice is often costly. Consequently numerous participants noted that it should be the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that financial resources are provided to survivors who wish to pursue legal options.

Finally, the decision to pursue legal options should lie with the survivor. Participants felt that, should a survivor choose that course, organisations should make the time and space to support such a decision – in terms of logistics, financial resources, and work obligation flexibility.

Gender Balance

The lack of gender balance in humanitarian work settings was highlighted as a concern, with there often being larger numbers of men in locations than women. It was felt that this type of dynamic has the potential to create a situation in which sexual violence is more likely to occur.

Another interesting concern voiced by participants highlighted was the explanations given by fellow co-workers for abuse. Many are built upon the myths that allow sexual violence to thrive globally, such as the often articulated 'men have needs' rape myth. One participant suggested that this particular phrase can perpetuate and normalise the 'look the other way' culture within organisations; something which further stigmatise stigmatises, isolated and silences survivors and perpetuate Rape Culture.

The issue rape myths was noted as often being worse in organisations or field sites where there are a disproportionate number of men in senior positions, which is supported by research illustrating that men often internalise rape myths to a greater degree than women.

Empowerment of Bystanders

The empowerment of bystanders raises the question as to the role that we all have as humanitarians when it comes to combating sexual violence, whether it is being perpetrated against our peers or by them.

> Bystander is everything. People need to know they can help and to not just walk by and let it happen. We have to empower bystanders and let them know they can and SHOULD do something.
>
> - *Survey Participant*

Notably, the above mention of a bystander includes organisations themselves. Participants expressed a strong feeling that humanitarian and development organisations should not stand idly by when there is knowledge that other organisations are allowing allow acts of sexual violence to occur.

To that end, one participant suggested that a coalition or network be formed to ensure protection from sexual violence is not left up to individual organisations, but is a shared responsibility. This might also help to establish guidelines and standards between different organisations when it comes to supporting survivors of sexual violence within the humanitarian and development community.

Reporting System & Whistleblower Protection

The following quote by a participant perfectly expresses the need for appropriate reporting systems, which includes whistleblower protection.

> What is needed is a system that aid/humanitarian workers or victims can report the case without worrying about losing job while the perpetrator can be punished effectively.
>
> But it seems like the victims are always worrying about losing job while the perpetrator keeps their position reflecting from my experience in the abuse of power cases.
>
> - *Survey Participant*

In addition, any support staff responsible for upholding the reporting system must have the necessary training to interact with survivors without re-traumatising them, and should be provided with psychosocial support to ensure that they are not also becoming traumatised as a result.

As noted in the quote, there was a very real concern coming from the participants that survivors often feel compelled to move posts or quit their jobs, while perpetrators continue with impunity. This concern is in part due to the complexity of the reporting process, but primarily the result of retaliatory measures that are sometimes taken against survivors for reporting.

Ultimately, it was felt that the negative stigma associated with sexual violence, which currently exists in the humanitarian and development community, ultimately discourages people from speaking out about their experiences with sexual violence. This contributes to the overall feeling of isolation felt by survivors, and allows the crime to continue with impunity.

Action

Appropriate actions includes the use of incident reports on security issues, as well as the need to implement whistleblower protection for those wishing to report sexual violence incidents against themselves or others.

However, the mere existence of incident reports or policies is not enough without follow-through. It is also not enough to have only a policy without a clear procedure to follow.

Participants noted that incident reports must be investigated with accordance to a clear procedure including who will be informed about the incident, who will handle an inquiry, if any, and what resources are available to follow through on the incident report. Most importantly – incident reports must include clear communication with the staff member who made the report. This should be done with strict confidentiality in mind and, at all times, with disclosure being at the behest and control of the survivor.

> It has been said before but it cannot be said enough but humanitarian organisations need to put words into action; rather than simply saying that they have a no-tolerance policy they have to demonstrate by investigating and prosecuting.
>
> - *Survey Participant*

Existing best practices

On the topic of sexual violence against and within the humanitarian and development community, it can be concluded that there are few existing public best practice guidelines for prevention, policies or procedures, and those that are available treat the issue as a peripheral concern. There is a significant gap and, as stated in the introduction, this report and checklist are the first steps toward bridging that gap.

Nonetheless, there are some existing guidelines and best practices regarding how to broadly handle sexual violence in conflict, sexual violence in the armed forces, and sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations or beneficiaries. Together, these existing documents provide a starting point for extending protection to humanitarian and development workers.

For the purposes of this report, the documents will largely be summarized by common theme, with particular points of applicability highlighted.

Sexual Violence in the Workplace

In 2015, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) released a handbook designed to assist Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions to first prevent and then address incidents of sexual violence, similar in its intent to this document. Amongst other things, it sets out how to integrate gender perspectives into all stages of complaints mechanisms, development and operation.[14]

The handbook also places a strong emphasis on the prevention of gender-related abuse, by proposing that:

- Clear laws, directives, and codes of conduct be developed;
- Dedicated staff be appointed to promote gender equalities issues;
- Education and training on gender-related abuse be expanded; and
- Staff support networks be formed.

It further notes that the promotion of complaints – followed by effective and fair investigations and support for victims – is required in order to create an overall work atmosphere in which individuals feel able to talk about gender issues in the workplace.[15]

While this does not yet fall under the category of best practices, as it could not be examined in full, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has recently created training materials on sexual violence in the workplace. While the training is not currently available publically, it could form the basis for a best practice standard for trainings on the topic and is an excellent step.

Similarly, Humanitrain[16] and the European Interagency Security Forum[17]

[14] Megan Bastick, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, *Gender and Complaints Mechanisms: A Handbook for Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions*, 2015, pgs. 9-29.

[15] *Ibid*, pgs. 41-77.
[16] Humanitrain, available at: http://humanitrain.com

have conducted trainings that touch on sexual violence against humanitarian and development workers, though these training materials are also not publicly available at this time.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Affected Population

InterAction has created the *Step by Step Guide to Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* of beneficiaries, and may prove helpful for addressing issues of sexual violence in humanitarian workplaces. The document places a strong emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of the prevention procedures, complaints mechanisms and investigation system that they propose all organisations set up.[18]

Of particular note though is the following quote in their guide, regarding the cost of implementation:

> Your senior management should consider how it will ensure that your team has sufficient time, human resources, and support. With the health and safety of beneficiaries, your funding and reputation at stake, the cost of not properly preventing and responding to SEA allegations is much greater than the staff time and resources required to do so. [19]

It can be anticipated that this argument will be put forward by humanitarian and development organisations when suggesting the creation of resources and systems to address sexual violence in their workplaces, and the above quote quite succinctly sums up why it is so important that such resources be allocated.

[17] European Interagency Security Forum, available at: https://www.eisf.eu
[18] InterAction, *InterAction Step by Step Guide to Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, June 2010.

[19] *Ibid*, pg. 8.

Investigation of Sexual Violence Incidents

The *Basic Standards of Best Practice on the Documentation of Sexual Violence as a Crime under International Law* was created by the United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office, along with a wealth of other contributors, to begin to develop a set of standards for investigating incidents of sexual violence in conflict. Although geared toward the investigation of sexual violence in conflict more broadly, later evolutions of the *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist* will address the core themes of evidence collection, investigation techniques, and how to speak to survivors.

CHS Alliance's *Guidelines for Investigations* is another similarly good resource. While focused on the investigation of incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations, it will nonetheless be a useful tool for developing such investigative procedures for looking into incidents against humanitarian and development workers.[20]

While perhaps not as helpful at this stage in the evolution of the *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist*, it is nonetheless worth noting the existence of the *Clinical Management of Rape Survivors* document created by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), amongst others. This document sets out the best practices for the clinical management of people who have been raped in emergency situations, as well as what organisations can and should provide in terms of access to medical and psychosocial care. Much of its information on how to approach survivors can be applied in the context

[20] CHS Alliance, *Guideline for Investigations: A guide for humanitarian organisations on receiving and investigating allegations of abuse, exploitation, fraud or corruption by their own staff*, 2015.

of humanitarian and development workers.[21]

It is also worth noting that, while the *Clinical Management of Rape Survivors* focuses on rape survivors and Report the Abuse considers a wider spectrum of sexual violence, many of the approaches to survivors are quite similar. Victim blaming occurs across a spectrum of experiences of sexual violence and the approaches for working with rape survivors can be easily adapted to work with other forms of sexual violence.

Similarly, the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* outlines suggestions for how to assist sexual violence survivors, many of which could apply to humanitarian and development workers as well as the affected population.[22]

Safety and Security

After reviewing nineteen documents on designing safety and security mechanisms, safety and security management, and risk assessments, the conclusion is that a significant number did not include any information on sexual violence as a danger for humanitarian and development workers.[23] Seven documents made no reference to this as a risk whatsoever.[24]

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[21] World Health Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Clinical Management of Rape Survivors: Developing protocols for use with refugees and internally displaced persons*, 2004.

[22] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*, 2007.

[23] Review included searches for reference to gender-based violence, sexual and gender-based violence, gender-motivated violence, gender-motivated crimes, sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and sexual exploitation and abuse.

[24] Vincenzo Bolletino, *Designing Security*, Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, Harvard University, 2006; InterAction, *The Security of National Staff: Towards Good Practices*, 2001; Sphere Project, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, 2011; InterHealth and People in Aid, *Approaches to Staff Care in International NGOs*, 2009; People in Aid, *Health and Safety in Aid Agencies*, 2002; International Committee of the Red Cross, *Staying Alive: Safety and Security guidelines for humanitarian*

Of those twelve documents that did mention sexual violence as a risk, the treatment of the issue varied dramatically. For example, ECHO's *Generic Security Guide* provides a list of suggestions to minimize the risk of sexual violence, all of which place responsibility on the survivor:

- Avoid walking or driving alone, particularly at night
- Avoid isolated, unsafe or poorly lit locations
- Avoid bars or clubs where crime is known to take place
- Trust your instincts – if they tell you to leave, leave immediately
- Avoid drugs and excessive use of alcohol
- Carry an alarm
- Carry a radio or mobile phone
- Ensure that drinks are not deliberately contaminated with drugs
- Dress unobtrusively and appropriately, bearing in mind the local culture
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Socialise in groups rather than alone
- Share accommodation rather than living alone.[25]

By making the survivor responsible for preventing their attack, ECHO undermines all other suggestions, even those that could be useful. As the focus is not on the behaviour of the perpetrator, survivors will continue to blame themselves and remain silenced.

Unfortunately, this is not the only document to fall into the trap of victim blaming, with reports from UNHCR,[26] United Nations Department of Safety &

volunteers in conflict areas, 2005.; Irish Aid, *Irish Aid Guidelines for NGO Professional Safety & Security Risk Management*.

[25] ECHO, *Generic Security Guide: For Humanitarian Organisations*, 2004, pg. 92.

[26] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Emergency Handbook*, "In Case of Sexual Assault during Employment," https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/34591/in-case-of-sexual-assault-during-employment.

Security (UNDSS)[27] and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC),[28] making similar statements.

One of the reviewed reports did note that sexual harassment in the office is inappropriate and provided some brief suggestions on how to handle it.[29] A further three reports noted that sexual violence is a danger to humanitarian and development workers, though the majority focused on reactions of the survivor and placed little to no responsibility on the organisation to provide safe environments or support to the survivor.[30] It is even rarer for a report to specifically place a duty of care to protect employees from sexual violence on the employer, or to make specific reference to the employer's duties after an incident. In fact, there were only four documents that did so.[31]

[27] United Nations Department of Safety & Security, *Be Safe, Be Secure: Security Guidelines for Women*, 2006, pgs. 18-22.

[28] International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Stay Safe: The International Federation's guide to a safer mission*, 2007, pgs. 198-201.

[29] Save the Children, *Safety First: A Safety and Security Handbook for Aid Workers*, 2010, pgs. 47-48.

[30] *Ibid*, pgs. 176-178; Front Line, *Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders*, 2005, pgs. 89-90; Association of German Development NGOs, *Minimum Standards regarding Staff Security in Humanitarian Aid*, 2002.

[31] Humanitarian Policy Group, *Mainstreaming Safety and Security Management in Aid Agencies*, 2001, pg. 5; CARE International, *Safety & Security Handbook*, 2004, pgs. 77-78; European Interagency Security Forum and InterAction, *NGO Safety and Security Training Project*, 2014; European Interagency Security Forum, *Gender and Security: Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Security Risk Management*, 2012.

What should Best Practices on Sexual Violence Prevention, Policy and Procedure look like?

It should not take millions of donor dollars to implement a regiment to ensure that sexual violence in our workplaces is first prevented and, when it does happen, that there are established and appropriate survivor-centred policies and procedures to respond to the situation. The Checklist below, divided into three broad categories, does require some initial investment – in terms of financial and human resources – but once put in place, it should function much like any other essential piece of HR, Administration or Finance. More importantly, to echo InterAction above, the cost of not protecting one's employees far outweighs the cost of implementation.

The most essential element of sexual violence prevention, policy and procedures best practice is that they are survivor-centred. Establishing measures like those set out below should not be done to protect the reputation of organisations. They should be implemented in order to create a work environment in which sexual violence in the workplace is both prohibited and addressed in a responsive manner.

Once it is established that sexual violence in the workplace is not acceptable, incidents should reduce because impunity breeds further violence. Moreover, firm policies that clearly illustrate belief in survivors will lead to more survivors feeling able to break the silence, which builds upon the aforementioned breaking of impunity. Belief in survivors sends a clear message to perpetrators that they will be challenged and punished.

Challenging all forms of sexual violence is fundamental in creating safe workspaces and empowering survivors to take back the control they lose when subjected to sexual violence. Safe and healthy humanitarian and development workers make for more efficient workplaces, making the affected population receiving programming the ultimate winners. The benefits really do outweigh the costs.

Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist

While prevention, policy and procedure are presented below as separate themes, in actuality the three must be adopted together in order to be effective. Each piece is vital to creating work environments where sexual violence is considered unacceptable and survivors can report should they experience an incident.

Preventing sexual violence and supporting survivors is not as simple as checking off a box on a list either. Each item must be considered holistically in the context of one another, as well as the unique work environment of different organisations.

These are the three central themes, upon which this report was created. The activities listed below each theme represent a series of actions that can and should be taken by humanitarian and development organisations to begin the process of addressing the problem of sexual violence in their workplaces. Again though, while conducting one activity will go towards addressing the larger problem, it likely will not be sufficient to create an atmosphere of impunity.

Similarly, this list cannot be considered exhaustive. Creativity and the involvement of unique sets of survivors will help to further create processes by which the issue can be addressed. Humanitarian and development organisations should engage with their employees – particularly those willing to come forward as survivors – to develop methods that will work for the organisation as well as those most affected by the problem.

Prevention

1. Regular trainings on consent, definition of sexual violence, and the limitations of using cultural as a justification for committing acts of sexual violence;

2. Trainings – for all staff ideally, but particularly HR, Gender and/or Sexual Violence Focal Points, and Management at the field and HQ level – on how to respond to sexual violence survivors, as well as training on victim -blaming and rape myths.

Prevention should be the core of work done by humanitarian and development organisations to address this problem. Similar to the adage that charity starts at home, creating work environments where sexual violence is unacceptable starts at head office, at both the HQ and field level.

Prevention not only helps to reduce the number of incidents that might occur, but is integral to creating an atmosphere where survivors will be wiling to report their experiences because prevention measures send the message that what has occurred to them was wrong.

These types of trainings however are of limited value if the messages behind them are not reinforced with strong policies and appropriate procedures when incidents do happen. Nonetheless, even the mere statement that sexual violence is unacceptable in humanitarian and development workplaces is an excellent step on the journey towards accountability. It is however, just a step.

Policy

1. Established and clear procedures, easily available in all relevant languages, setting out procedures for submitting reports or complaints of sexual violence;
2. Established relationships with other organisations on location for horizontal reporting of sexual violence incidents;
3. Established investigative or inquiry procedures – and training for individuals chosen to undertake the activity - that treats accused persons as innocent until proven guilty, but also does not place blame on survivors;
4. Safety and security management systems that address risks of sexual violence while working in the field;
5. Creation of a whistleblowing network that allows for reporting of sexual violence incidents without fear of reprisal.

Having strong, responsive, survivor-centred and widely available policies are key to ensuring that the framework for both preventing and addressing incidents of sexual violence in humanitarian and development workplaces is created. Naturally, what is on paper must be followed through by response, but with only 16% of humanitarian and development organisations contacted having any policy or procedure on the topic at all, having something on paper actually becomes an important action.

It is imperative that the policies developed are created with support for survivors being a central goal. This does not mean that we treat alleged perpetrators unfairly or unduly harsh, but with the current atmosphere of retaliation against survivors who report, not to mention the extraordinary 83% who are unhappy with how their organisation has handled their complaints of sexual violence, it is imperative that this be a significant aspect of how the problem is approached.

Policies must also engage with all levels of employees, with national staff being a key demographic to be consulted in the development of any type of structure or framework.

Procedure

1. Access to responsive and safe medical care (including, but not limited to, STI medication, rape kit examinations, morning-after pill, and PEP kit);

2. Access to responsive and safe psychosocial care at any point after the experience, should the survivor want it. Such psychosocial care should also be provided to anyone involved in the incident or aftermath of the incident, as vicarious trauma can be as damaging as primary trauma;

3. Ability to remove the survivor from unsafe environment, if they so choose, with minimal fanfare;

4. Option for the survivor to take paid compassionate leave, at any point following their experience;

5. Provide information to the survivor in terms of legal options, including, but not limited to, assessment of potential dangers and benefits of filing report with the police; knowledge of any legal or investigative procedures in organisation or in organisation of accused (if applicable); list of qualified legal representatives (at field and HQ level) that can advise them of their legal rights and options.

How a humanitarian or development organization responds to incidents or accusations of sexual violence dictates to a strong degree how survivors will recover from their experiences with sexual violence. Handled well, an otherwise horrible situation can be made marginally better. It is remarkably easy to deal with an incident of sexual violence in a manner that is responsive and healing. It is also equally easy to set a survivor on a destructive and blame filled path, with repeated traumatization.

The key difference between those two dramatically different outcomes comes down to the approach in how an organization responds; more specifically, whether their approach is survivor-centred. By engaging with employees within their organization to ensure that this does occur, considerable progress can be made towards creating workplaces where sexual violence is no longer considered tolerable. Having prevention strategies and policies in place is fantastic, but how an organization responds is the real test of whether sexual violence does in fact occur with impunity.

Conclusion

This is the first step toward an across the board implementation of measures to prevent sexual violence against and within the humanitarian and development community, and to have appropriate and responsive policies and procedures in place to address incidents when they do happen.

What happens next will largely depend on two things: the strength of the voices of humanitarian and development workers demanding more from their organisations; and a willingness for all organisations to change how they address this problem.

Sexual violence within the humanitarian and development community is crosscutting. It overlaps with humanitarian and development worker mental health, PTSD, and burnout. It is affected by a work environment that is formulated by traditional masculinities and an overtly masculine military culture – seen particularly strongly in peace operations. It is part of a culture that still encourages – implicitly and explicitly – a cowboy-esque approach to work, where danger-seeking behaviour is valued – affecting men and women's roles, responsibilities and expectations. Senior management teams remain overwhelmingly male-dominated and the next generation of humanitarian workers are overwhelmingly young women, a perfect storm for gender imbalance issues but also a sign of hope for gender balance in the coming years.

Addressing sexual violence against and within the humanitarian community is critical to promoting gender and sexual equality for humanitarian and development workers. It will take time to change attitudes and behaviour, and for retaliatory measures to cease being the norm. It will take time for survivors to feel comfortable reporting what is happening to them. We hope the *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist* will provide a viable framework to secure survivor-centred approaches, as a step toward implementing our goals across all humanitarian and development organisations.

Organisations need to have clear policies on how to handle all types of sexual violence whether it be harassment or rape. They need to have resources in place (Plan B, PEP, access to trained mental health professionals).

Organizations need to stop pretending that this issue doesn't exist. It needs to be included in security briefings

Security guidelines often do not have a single reference to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape. We need to acknowledge that there is a serious risk of gender-based violence and [to] make sure that the appropriate guidelines and protocols [are] in place for prevention, crisis management and after care. We cannot effectively address a threat if we are failing to recognize it. In the field, men and women experience different security risks. Women in this type of work environment are more likely to be at risk in their own compounds or workplaces from fellow employees or civilians, not from state actors like military or police. Security procedures need to reflect this reality.[32]

[32] Anonymous survey respondent, Survey on Sexual Violence in the Humanitarian Community, Report the Abuse.

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Annex I

Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist

Prevention

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Policy

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Procedure

1. Access to responsive and safe medical care (including, but not limited to STI medication, rape kit examinations, morning-after pill, and PEP kit);

2. Access to responsive and safe psychosocial care at any point after the experience, should the survivor want it. Such psychosocial care should also be provided to anyone involved in the incident or aftermath of the incident, as vicarious trauma can be as damaging as primary trauma;

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