Joint Regional Network for Tigray

Joint Regional Network on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

Globally and through IASC leadership, humanitarian agencies have affirmed their commitment toward ensuring that in every humanitarian operation, agencies will actively prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel and non-agency personnel involved in delivering assistance. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) must not be tolerated; they are an unacceptable breach of the fundamental rights of the people we serve, as well as a deep betrayal of our core values.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is critical for the aid agencies in all contexts in which we work – both development and emergency contexts. Effective prevention and response require not only action by individual agencies, but also a coordinated and collaborative approach.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is an active commitment by humanitarian actors and organisations to use power responsibly to take account of, give account to, and be held to account by the people they seek to assist\(^1\). Systematic and coordinated community engagement ensures humanitarian response is accountable to affected people. In this light, system-wide accountability is essential to meeting organisational and collective commitments as outlined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution Workstream and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). Under these commitments and standards, aid agencies are expected to strengthen coordinated and harmonised community engagement practices for more effective and accountable humanitarian action.

Further, AAP and PSEA are intrinsically linked and must be addressed hand in hand through effective coordination, however, the two should not be conflated. Any act of SEA by those associated with the provision of aid is the most acute possible breach of our accountability to affected people. However, AAP is not only about the appropriate handling and follow up of individual complaints of SEA, but it is about an effective, relevant and accountable response, designed and implemented with people at the centre.

With these backdrops, a joint regional network on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is established to respond to the Northern conflict in Tigray and surrounding areas to coordinate and strengthen the collective approaches to community engagement as well as PSEA to ensure system-wide accountability across the region.

Recognizing the linkage between the various cross-cutting issues, the Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network is established in 2021 to pool resources for collective outcomes across these complementarity priorities. The aim is to ensure stronger, linked and more harmonized guidance, resources and support; promote and align existing standards and commitments and identify gaps and advocate to fill them.

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\(^1\) Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).
Key objectives

- Advocate and support the mainstreaming and integration of AAP and PSEA into humanitarian action and preparedness settings
- Establish and contextualise the guidelines and tools to support the inter-agency mechanisms with their operationalisation
- Provide tailored support to inter-agency coordination groups as requested, this includes technical advice, capacity building/strengthening, peer to peer exchange and more
- Advocate and support establishing evidence-based information (community feedback and complaints data system) at the inter-agency level to advocate strengthen the response-wide approaches
- Support in amplifying community voices to ensure collective accountability in humanitarian action
- Promote and assess joint approaches and mechanisms such as feedback mechanisms, creating more efficient and effective channels for communities
- Increasing capacity of humanitarian actors/service providers, including network focal points, humanitarian country team members, clusters, and government counterparts, on prevention, protection and reporting SEA in an intersection, gender-specific and survivor-centred manner
- Advocating for the rights, protection and well-being of affected populations, in particular women, children and adolescents of diverse intersectional backgrounds, for the prevention of and response to SEA, as a priority throughout humanitarian programming

Governance and structure

Leadership and scope

The Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network reports to the National PSEA Network and the Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group in Ethiopia.

The Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network will be comprised of two sub-networks that will operate under the same Action Plan and ToR but be represented in two different cities with individual co-chairs.

The Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network is chaired by two members; one co-chair represents the AAP component and one co-chair represents the PSEA component. The co-chairs are responsible for ensuring effective and relevant interface with the National PSEA Network and the Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group in Ethiopia as well as between the co-chairs of the two sub-networks in the region.

The modality of the Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network will be revised on a quarterly basis.

Membership

Participation is open to any interested humanitarian organisations working in the region, with the aim to bring together NGOs, UN, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, CSOs, and other relevant international organisations.

The core group is comprised of focal points of AAP and PSEA from various agencies at the regional level. However, the membership is open to other actors supporting or interested in the accountability work. It
is encouraged that members take leadership on specific topics to ensure shared responsibilities in the collective efforts.

Goal

The goal of the Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network is to promote interagency coordination and collaboration and provide technical support and capacity building in line with humanitarian principles and global guidelines.

Specific Objectives

- Establish, implement and maintain an inter-agency AAP/PSEA action plan for the region
- Where relevant incorporate AAP modules in the national PSEA curriculum
- Conduct training sessions and trainings to partners on specific topics as per expressed needs
- Document and share regional good practices and lessons learned on inter-agency collaboration on AAP and PSEA as well as prevention and response mechanisms
- Escalating issues highlighted in the Joint Regional AAP/PSEA network, and by others
- Overseeing mainstreaming of AAP/PSEA in existing guidelines and strategies as well as the development of additional guidelines and strategies as needed
- Supporting the development of advocacy messaging and strategy targeting various stakeholders (humanitarian leadership, donors, cluster coordinators etc.) towards a more inclusive and accountable response
- Ensure Interagency feedback mechanisms are established and functioning
- Oversee and support interagency community engagement with affected population
- Support the coordination and development of streamlined and multipurpose interagency accountability mechanisms wherein disaggregated feedback from the affected population is shared and promoted and feedback provided by affected populations is responded to

Working Methods

- The Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network coordination meeting will primarily be convened on a weekly basis. However, ad hoc meetings will be held on requests from the membership
- The co-chairs will coordinate and facilitate communication with the members (including regular meetings) as well as follow up action points/deliverables as agreed with the members
- The Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network will establish key collective priorities annually and monitor the progress collectively. The key priorities should reflect the initiatives from the membership
- This ToR will be reviewed on an annual basis – co-chairs will amend the content as suggested by the membership in collaboration with the co-chairs of the National PSEA Network and the Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group in Ethiopia

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2 To be reviewed and adjusted by Joint Regional AAP/PSEA Network co-chairs and members