

## 2.6 Discuss and deliver to expectations and identified needs of partners

### How to?

Any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Partnership Agreement signed between Oxfam GB and a partner organisation should state clearly that partner staff implementing Oxfam GB-supported programmes are obliged to abide by a staff Code of Conduct that is in line with OGB's own. Partner organisations need to be proven to be capable of valuing, managing, monitoring and enforcing appropriate personal behaviour in their staff.

If a partner organisation does not have their own Code of Conduct they will either need to write one or to use OGB's own.

Oxfam GB's stance on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is set out clearly in the CoC, and discussions must be held with partners to explore their expectations and needs with regards to preventing and dealing with SEA. The manner in which they do so must be in line with OGB's own.

Issues that will need to be clarified include:

Identification of Oxfam GB staff member responsible for liaising with partners about their PSEA commitments in the CoC. *(This role may also include the other commitments in the CoC and MoU or Partnership Agreement, depending on the context.)*

- This staff member would be responsible for ensuring that partners are fully informed as to their obligations regarding PSEA and for ensuring that they abide by a CoC.
- Even in the contexts where Oxfam GB has a country PSEA Focal Point it may not be appropriate for this person to liaise with partners. For example, if the country PSEA Focal Point is the HRM it may make more sense for a staff member who liaises with partners on programme issues to also take up the subject of PSEA.
- In terms of delivering training however, the HRM may be the person best equipped to do this, thus being called on for specific support to the partners.

Delivery of training / awareness raising sessions.

- Oxfam GB should plan the joint delivery of training and awareness-raising sessions on PSEA regularly with partners ie. at the start of working together for a new partner; once per year for ongoing partners; if there is a significant changeover of staff, if there is significant need etc.
- Depending on the context, people and relationships involved it may be appropriate to include partners in training sessions run for Oxfam GB staff as opposed to holding separate sessions.

Roles and responsibilities in terms of informing communities, receiving complaints, and dealing with allegations

- In order to combat SEA, the communities with whom Oxfam GB and its partners are working must be informed as to what Oxfam GB and partners consider to be unacceptable behaviour from its staff and partners. Oxfam GB and its partners must agree as to how best this can be done in the various contexts in which they are working.
- Linked to this, the communities need to know how they can make a complaint if necessary. Given that communities may not always be able to identify whether a staff member belongs to Oxfam GB or its partners, a joint complaints mechanism should be established wherever possible. Oxfam GB and its partners will need to agree

issues such as to whom community members can complain, how complaints will be recorded, and who the complaints are passed to for follow-up.

- Even though partner staff might be obliged to respect Oxfam GB's CoC, they are in the employ of, and are managed by, the partner organisation. Therefore a complaint made against a partner staff member should be dealt with by the partner. Oxfam GB has a role to play in checking with the partner concerned to ensure that a complaint has been followed up, however the partner organisation will most likely have its own procedures for investigating a complaint (however informal) and then dealing with consequent discipline issues. Oxfam GB can offer to assist the partner in following up on a complaint (for example with HR advice on how to run an investigation, perhaps even offering investigators etc.), however if the partner accepts that Oxfam GB plays a more active role in dealing with a complaint the extent of this role and the activities involved should be agreed in writing to avoid potential confusion and tensions. If a partner organisation does not think a complaint is worth investigating, Oxfam GB should explore the matter further and undertake an investigation itself if it concludes that there is sufficient reason to. Oxfam GB should share the findings of its investigation with the partner, but can not however force a partner to take action. The complaint is more important than who it is against, and the reasons for Oxfam GB getting involved in dealing with a complaint against a partner would be to support any victim (alleged and proven) and to learn from allegations what it can do further to prevent SEA.

#### The consequences of a breach of the CoC by a partner staff member.

- This would have to be discussed largely on a case by case basis and may range from Oxfam GB refusing to continue working with the partner (eg. if senior management has been involved, or have failed to show respect for the CoC in handling the breach), through to the partner staff member being dismissed and Oxfam GB continuing to work with the partner.

#### Other means of preventing SEA

- Delivering training and promoting awareness raising amongst staff are preventive activities that Oxfam GB should be able to undertake for partners. It may be that the relationship between Oxfam GB and a partner is such that other preventive measures can be explored as well eg. avoiding risky work behaviours such as staff members spending long periods of time staying in communities by themselves; trying to balance teams with a mix of men and women; etc.

#### **Related Links/Documents**

Partnership Policy

Oxfam GB Complaints Policy and Guidance for Implementation in the International Department