



Policy: Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse

Revised policy reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors	January 23, 2020
Approved by the Board of Directors	June 20, 2019
Recommended by the Governance Committee	June 13, 2019

1. Introduction and Policy Statement

CAUSE Canada has a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). CAUSE Canada considers all forms of SEA to be incompatible with its fundamental belief in the human dignity of all people and is in compliance with international and national agreements and standards.¹

2. Scope

This policy applies globally to all CAUSE Canada Employees and Related Personnel, both during and outside normal working hours; including CAUSE Canada’s Canadian and country office employees; those in partnership, subgrant, or subrecipient agreements with CAUSE Canada; national and international consultants; individual and corporate contractors; board members; interns; and volunteers. Except in countries where the following policy contravenes local legislation, in these cases, local legislation must be followed with guidance from the Canadian Head Office. CAUSE Canada’s policy will apply in the event that it is more stringent than local legislation.

This policy sets out CAUSE Canada’s approach to preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes:

- Our commitments to prevent SEA and to ensure effective action is taken when incidents occur;
- Principles upon which we will base our decision-making and actions; and
- Our expectations of all those who work on behalf of CAUSE Canada.

3. Definition of Terms

- 3.1. Children: individuals under the age of 18.
- 3.2. Focal point: person appointed and trained to receive sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) complaints and to provide support on SEA.
- 3.3. Employees and related personnel: Canadian and country office employees; those in partnership, subgrant, or subrecipient agreements with CAUSE Canada; national and international consultants; individual and corporate contractors; board members; interns; and volunteers.
- 3.4. Sexual abuse: an actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions (U.N. Secretary-General’s bulletin, 2003).

¹ https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf

3.5. 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 (U.N. Secretary-General's bulletin, 2003).

3.6. **Sexual harassment:** any unwelcome sexual advance or unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature between employees with differential power, which may include, but is not limited to, advances, invitations, inappropriate requests or asking for favours; comments, insults, lewd jokes, inappropriate comments about a person's body or appearance; unnecessary physical contact, indecent looks or other inappropriate gestures; threats, implicit or explicit retaliation (refusal of a promotion, imposition of disciplinary measures, dismissal) or other injustices associated with a rejected request for sexual favours; promises of benefits or awards in exchange for sexual favours.

3.7. **Survivor:** The person who is sexually exploited or sexually abused.

3.8. **Subject of complaint:** alleged perpetrator of SEA.

4. CAUSE Canada SEA Core Principles:

4.1. Zero tolerance for SEA and zero tolerance of inaction.

4.2. Leadership and Management has the responsibility for ensuring the SEA policies and procedures are understood and implemented.

4.3. Survivor needs are prioritized, and confidentiality is a priority.

4.4. Preventing SEA is a shared responsibility.

4.5. Gender inequality and other power imbalances are addressed.

4.6. Clear procedures for reporting will be easily accessed to enhance accountability and transparency.

5. Based on the Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse devised by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2019) and Global Affairs Canada (2018), CAUSE Canada abides by the following policies:

5.1. SEA by CAUSE Canada employees are acts of gross misconduct, and therefore grounds for termination of employment if proven.

5.2. A culture of zero tolerance for SEA in all work settings.

5.3. Sexual activity with children is strictly prohibited regardless of the local age of consent.

5.4. Exchange of money, goods, services, or employment for sex or any forms of exploitative behaviour by employees is strictly prohibited.

5.5. Sexual relationships between employees and program beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power relations and undermine the integrity of CAUSE Canada's development work.

5.6. All employees are responsible for understanding and complying with the Policy and for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents SEA and promotes the implementation of this policy.

5.7. All employees must report their concerns or suspicions about possible SEA by an employee through the established reporting mechanisms.

- 5.8. High standards for staff recruitment within the organization and its country offices.
- 5.9. Clear, publicly available policies, procedures, and codes of conduct on SEA.
- 5.10. Training on prevention of SEA for all staff during onboarding, annually or as required.
- 5.11. Anonymous and confidential reporting mechanisms that protect survivors and whistleblowers and the appropriate services and resources to support them.
- 5.12. Monitoring and investigation procedures for all cases of alleged SEA.
- 5.13. Remedial non-disciplinary measures in cases of minor staff misconduct, and disciplinary measures in cases of more severe staff misconduct, including the termination of employment and referral to the relevant authorities in cases of criminal conduct.
- 5.14. Annual reporting by the Executive Director to the Board of Directors on all alleged and confirmed cases of SEA.
- 5.15. Informing contributing funding agencies about any allegations and confirmed cases.

This policy applies globally to all CAUSE Canada employees and related personnel, both during and outside normal working hours.

6. CAUSE Canada SEA Procedural Commitments

Accordingly, CAUSE Canada is committed to fulfilling the following policy commitment as outlined above by adherence to the following procedural standards:

- 6.1. Integrate Cause Canada's Policy and Employee Code of Conduct with the national labour and criminal laws into the local office's/local implementing partner's organisational policies and procedures; and be part of all employment contracts.
- 6.2. Integrate country-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on SEA prevention and response and update them based on emergent needs and best practices. The country-specific SOPs will take into consideration local culture and pre-existing structures for addressing SEA and assisting SEA survivors.
- 6.3. CAUSE Canada partners, subgrantees, or subrecipients will be required to incorporate the Policy into their agreements with the provision that the violation of the Policy will constitute grounds for agreement termination.
- 6.4. Allocate human and financial resources for Policy implementation, including the establishment and maintenance of a complaint mechanism, training and basic emergency services.
- 6.5. Assign appropriate SEA job responsibilities, such as employee training; Policy monitoring and evaluation; and complaint management and response into specific staff positions to ensure investigation training and effective implementation.
- 6.6. Provide basic training to all employees on SEA; individual roles and responsibilities on eradicating and preventing SEA; appropriate staff conduct; reporting and investigation procedures; and survivors' needs and assistance provision.
- 6.7. Integrate SEA policies into employee recruitment and training. All job candidates will undergo background, criminal, professional and personnel reference checks where feasible and ensure that a subject of complaints whose responsibility for SEA has been proven are

not re-deployed or rehired. New employees will sign the Policy and the Code of Conduct and undergo SEA training. All employees will undergo annual refresher trainings.

- 6.8. Establish safe, confidential, and accessible complaint mechanisms for reporting SEA by survivors, witnesses, or people aware of wrongdoing, and ensure that all beneficiaries and employees understand how it works.
- 6.9. Investigate all allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse by employees in a sensitive, professional, and timely manner. In cases where an issue comes to the attention of staff but is not directly related to their employment responsibilities, they should contact the appropriate local authorities.
- 6.10. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continued effectiveness and responsiveness to emergency issues/risks.

7. Complaint mechanism and investigation protocol

The complaint mechanism will reflect the Policy and the implementing countries' contexts, including national legislation, community culture, especially, local attitudes towards raising concerns to outsiders and discussing sex, as well as literacy levels.

- 7.1. **Safety:** CAUSE Canada will take into account and seek to mitigate potential risks to all parties, including the subject of complaint.
- 7.2. **Confidentiality:** restricted access to and limited sharing of information will enable complainants to submit allegations and receive assistance without being stigmatised and will maintain the presumption of innocence of the subject of complaint.
- 7.3. **Accessibility:** CAUSE Canada will facilitate the process of lodging a complaint by any individual, including vulnerable groups.
- 7.4. **Transparency:** CAUSE Canada will involve communities in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation of the complaint mechanism and inform them about the outcomes and resultant procedures.

CAUSE Canada will investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving CAUSE Canada staff, volunteers, consultants, and partners in a timely and professional manner and will engage professional investigators or secure investigative expertise as appropriate if needed. Investigations are an internal administrative process which may or may not involve the police or judiciary. Investigations are carried out so that CAUSE Canada can have the best information possible on which to base its decisions concerning conduct and consequences thereof.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

CAUSE Canada employees and associated personnel must comply with this policy. CAUSE Canada will take all allegations of SEA brought to its attention seriously and pursue appropriate disciplinary action against the subject of complaint if the investigation reveals a Policy violation. CAUSE Canada adopts a survivor-centered approach, which ensures that all responses to Policy violations are developed in a manner that balances respect for due process with SEA survivors' wishes, safety, and well-being. Managers at all level will familiarize all employees with the Policy to ensure that they understand and comply with it. All employees must:

- 8.1. understand that they are accountable to beneficiaries and communities;



- 8.2. engage in a respectful and equal relationship with all community members as well as colleagues;
- 8.3. recognize that this policy applies at or away from the workplace, during or outside office hours and it outlines an expectation for professional conduct under all circumstances;
- 8.4. contribute to a global reduction in SEA incidents by abiding by CAUSE Canada *Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual, Exploitation, and Abuse*.

9. Roles and Responsibilities of CAUSE Canada to implement policy

- All employees are responsible for adhering to the policy, code of conduct, and reporting any incidents.
- CAUSE Canada's Executive Director, Country Directors, and Board of Directors are responsible for undertaking actions to create accountability, commitment, promote awareness and compliance with this policy.
- Focal points and management in Canada and in field offices will provide technical support and training on incident management in field countries where CAUSE Canada's programs are implemented.
- Designated Focal Points will be the lead person in the field to train local staff, address incidences and liaison between different actors.